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ABSTRACT

The bulletin investigates the major positions held by the Catholic Church toward population problems. Separate sections discuss the demographic debate, traditional church teaching, the birth control movement, the Vatican Council II and the Papal Birth Control Commission, Pope Paul's 1968 Encyclical against contraception, the 1980 Synod of Bishops, and the outlook for the future. The author states that the Church's position, which prohibits the use of artificial methods of contraception, hinders it and its 750 million adherents from taking an effective lead in the growing threat of global overpopulation. In 1958 Pope Pius XII forbade contraceptive use of the pill. Despite the liberal spirit engendered by Vatican Council II and against the recommendation of a Papal Birth Control Commission, Pope Paul VI reaffirmed the ban in his 1968 Encyclical. This stance has been upheld by Pope John Paul II and the 1980 Synod of Bishops. Surveys, however, reveal that Catholic married couples turn to artifical methods to regulate the size of their families. The conclusion is that the Pope and the Vatican, while insisting on human rights and the need for a reordering of unjust economic, social, and political structures, seem to be neglecting the threat of a breakdown of civilization that looms with the prospect of too many people and too little space with too few resources. (Author/KC)

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ED199179

POPULATION BULLETIN

CATHOLIC PERSPECTIVES ON POPULATION

ISSUES II

By Francis X. Murphy, C.S.S.R.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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Abstract—This *Bulletin* discusses the history and current status of the population problem from a Roman Catholic viewpoint. While upholding human rights and admitting the right of couples to control the size of their family, the Catholic Church continues to prohibit the use of artificial methods of contraception as sinful. This position hinders the Church, with its some 750 million adherents, from taking an effective lead in facing the growing threat of global overpopulation. Rhythm has been permitted since 1930 but Pope Pius XII in 1958 forbade contraceptive use of the pill. Despite the liberal spirit engendered by Vatican Council II and against the recommendation of a papal birth control commission, Pope Paul VI in his 1968 Encyclical *Humanae vitae* reaffirmed the ban on artificial contraception, apparently convinced that this was necessary to combat growing sexual immorality, family breakdown, and materialism. This stance has been upheld by Pope John Paul II and the 1980 Synod of Bishops. The decision ignores the pleas of a number of responsible churchmen speaking for their people at the Synod, and of a growing majority of Catholic theologians and laity, that Church teaching must be updated to take account of the facts of modern life. Surveys reveal that Catholic married couples increasingly find Church-approved natural family planning methods unsatisfactory and feel obliged to turn to artificial methods to regulate the size of their families. On the world scale, Pope John Paul II and the Vatican, while insisting on human rights and the need for a reordering of unjust economic, social and political structures, seem to be neglecting the threat of civilizational breakdown that looms with the prospect of too many people in too little space with too few resources.

Editor: Jean van der Tak

Graphics: James O'Brien

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Catholic Perspectives on Population Issues II

By Francis X. Murphy, C.SS.R.

	Page
Introduction	3
The Demographic Debate	6
Traditional Church Teaching	9
The Phenomenon of Birth Control	11
The birth control movement	11
Response of the Catholic Church, 1879-1930	12
Margaret Sanger	12
United Nations	13
The Church and women's rights	15
U.S. Catholic fertility behavior	15
Abortion attitudes	17
Teachings of other churches	18
The Love Ethic	19
Rhythm and the Pill	20
A Reorientation of Moral Thinking	22
Vatican Council II	22
The Papal Birth Control Commission	23
Humanae vitae	23
The Reaction	24
1980 Synod of Bishops	27
The Outlook	34
References	39
Selected Bibliography	43

Figures

1. World Population Explosion	5
2. Population Growth and Food Production in Less Developed Countries: 1961-65 to 1976	7
3. Total Marital Fertility Rates for U.S. Catholics and Non-Catholics: 1951-1975	16
4. Approval of Abortion Among Catholics, Protestants, Jews, and Non-Church-Affiliated: United States, 1965-1978	18

Table

1. Current Contraceptive Practice of White Catholic and Non-Catholic Married Women Under Age 45: United States, 1965, 1970, 1975	17

Wide World photos

Pope John Paul II arrives in Cebu during his visit to the Philippines in February 1981 where he reaffirmed his support of the continuing Catholic Church ban on artificial birth control. The Philippines has a high 2.4 percent annual rate of natural increase (births minus deaths). The government has supported family planning since 1971 and currently hopes to reduce fertility to replacement level by the year 2000.

Catholic Perspectives on Population Issues II

By **Francis X. Murphy, C.SS.R.**
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The Reverend Francis X. Murphy, C.SS.R., a Redemptorist priest, is Rector of Holy Redeemer College, Washington, D.C. An historian and theologian, he has written extensively on Vatican affairs, population, and the moral teachings of the early and modern Roman Catholic Church. He was a professor of moral theology at the Academia Alfonsiana of the Lateran University in Rome from 1959 to 1976 and a peritus *(expert) at Vatican Council II (1962-1965). He has been a frequent TV and radio commentator on Catholic affairs, including coverage in 1978 of the deaths of Pope Paul VI and John Paul I and the two papal conclaves to choose their successors, and of Pope John Paul II's visit to the United States in 1979. He served on the Board of Trustees of the Population Reference Bureau from 1975 to March, 1981.*

In producing this Population Bulletin, *Father Murphy has had the close collaboration of Jean van der Tak, whose editorial assistance has proven invaluable, and of Leon Bouvier, whose expertise has added to the actuality of the* Bulletin. *Thanks are also due to the editor of* The Atlantic Monthly *for permission to cite passages dealing with the 1980 Synod of Bishops from the article, "Of Sex and the Catholic Church," by Francis X. Murphy, C.SS.R., in* The Atlantic Monthly, *Vol. 247, No. 2 (February 1981) pp. 44-57.*

In 1975 the Population Reference Bureau published an evaluation of the Roman Catholic Church's position on the world demographic situation in a *Population Bulletin* entitled "Catholic Perspectives on Population Issues," co-authored by the present author and Joseph F. Erhart. That *Bulletin* was timely due in part to the pronatalist stance adopted by the Vatican delegation at the 1974 United Nations World Population Conference and the ongoing controversy surrounding Pope Paul VI's 1968 Encyclical *Humanae vitae* (Of human life) that banned the use of artificial contraceptives as sinful.[1]

Because the Catholic Church claims dominion over the spiritual beliefs of some 750 million faithful—close to one-sixth of the world's inhabitants—its current position on birth control and the crucial problem of rapid world population growth cannot be ignored. An updating of the *Bulletin* appeared imperative following the major changes in the Church's leadership with the death of Pope Paul and election of John Paul II in 1978 and the need to evaluate the proceedings of the 1980 Roman Synod of Bishops which dealt with the family and ended with a sermon by Pope John Paul and a "Message to the Christian Family in the Modern World," reaffirming the Church's prohibition of artificial methods of birth control.[2]

While there has been a lowering of public attention to the clash between limited resources and the growing billions of people occupying the planet Earth, the danger of annihilation through hunger is no less a menace to humankind than it was in the 1930s. Then the problem hit the headlines with such manifestos as *Famine—1975!* by William and Paul Paddock and Paul Ehrlich's

The Population Bomb. Although timewise these warnings proved premature, world hunger is still a horrible prospect. Nor is this merely a projection. At the present moment, according to World Bank estimates, a sixth of the world's men, women, and children are living at a less than subsistence level. The Bank also estimates that, among children under age five alone, deaths related to malnutrition may run as high as ten million a year.[3] This means, of course, that incredible numbers of the human community never arrive at the possibility of enjoying the dignity they deserve as individuals created—in the Judeo-Christian view at least—in the image of God and entitled to develop into intelligent, self-reliant personalities. While heroic efforts have been made by governments to increase food production and dramatic breakthroughs such as the "green revolution" have been accomplished by plant geneticists, beginning in Mexico and the Philippines, large parts of the world still suffer widespread hunger and famine.

With the world's population growing by some 75 million a year, the per capita increase in world food supplies is diminishing. Agronomists feel that the limits of the nutritional miracle are being reached. Besides, large-scale cultivation of the new grains is creating social and economic problems that are gravely disturbing the stability of the less developed nations.

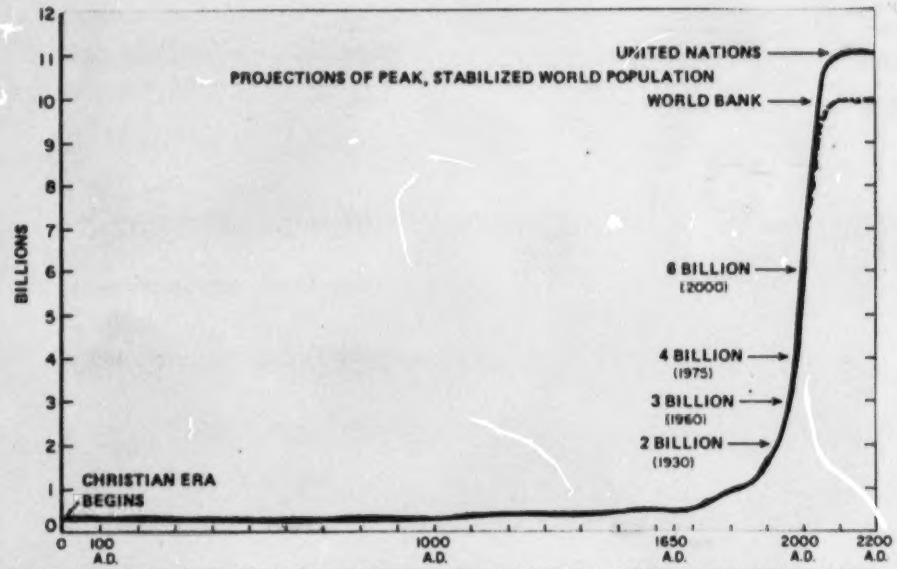
In the past decade, the indigenous production of food in India, Indonesia, the Philippines, Pakistan, Colombia, and Mexico, for example, increased from 30 to 50 percent. These gains raised total world production of food and feed grains from 951,000 metric tons in 1965 to 1.4 million tons in 1980. The large gains in feed grains produced more livestock and poultry and this in turn meant, usually, better human diets. But these achievements have exacted a price.

High-yield grains require large quantities of fertilizer and pesticides to ward off insects and disease. They need more irrigation water and expensive machinery. With the shift from labor-intensive farming to high-technology agriculture, antiquated storage and transportation systems have to be replaced. This requires hard cash. In India alone it costs more than five billion dollars annually for fertilizer, pesticides, and agricultural equipment to support the bare self-sufficiency in food which the country has now achieved.[4] The impact of high-technology agriculture on the employment situation and land distribution is almost unthinkable.

In Africa, despite an increase in the food grown each year, thanks to new methods, the line of demarcation between population growth and food production has been passed so that the continent is no longer able to feed itself. Other peoples on the verge of achieving self-sufficiency in food production are suffering from similar economic problems. What is of great significance, the difficulty in obtaining the vast oil supplies necessary to continue even current world agricultural production makes the stability of the overcrowded nations more precarious. The fate of the destitute in both urban and rural areas grows grimmer, despite the efforts of world organizations and voluntary agencies attempting to aid them.[5]

In this world dilemma, most concerned individuals and organizations feel that one necessary remedy is a reduction of annual births on a worldwide as well as local scale. Another is the promotion of new food production methods and distribution of food and resources on a far vaster scale than now. But both these remedies run into grave difficulties. While a vast program of planned parenthood is actually in progress in most parts of the world, the cutback in births will relieve pressures on overpopulated lands only some two decades hence. And the distribution of the world's goods is so disproportionate between the "have" and "have-

Figure 1. World Population Explosion



Sources: Judah Matras, *Populations and Societies* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1973); United Nations, *World Population Trends and Prospects by Country, 1950-2000* (1979), and *Prospects of Population: Methodology and Assumptions*; K. C. Zachariah and My Thi Vu, World Bank, *Population Projections, 1980, and Long-Term (Stationary Population)*, July 1980.

World population grew slowly from about 250 million at the time of Christ to half a billion about 1650 and then began to increase at an accelerating rate, reaching 1 billion about 1800, 2 billion in 1930, 3 billion in 1960, and 4 billion in 1975. By the year 2000, the total is projected to be 6 billion. The United Nations currently projects an ultimate peak stabilized world population of 11 billion, reached about 2125, and the World Bank projects about 10 billion, reached around 2090.

not" nations that, short of a global cataclysm, there are no political, social, or economic revolutions that could possibly bring about changes in world power relationships sufficient to close the gap.

Meanwhile other factors of an ideological and religious nature affect the situation. Of these, the most immediately pertinent is the attitude of the Catholic Church toward birth control methods and the attack by Vatican authorities on what they label a "contraceptive mentality" which they equate with an anti-life posture.

While Vatican Council II (1962-1965) recognized the population problem and defined the right and duty of parents to determine the number of children they should have, the Church's highest authorities have not highlighted this feature of Catholic doctrine.[6] Instead, they have constantly cautioned governments against the use of force to persuade people to cut back on the size of their families and seem to have adopted a pronatalist policy based on the belief that demographers who warn of a possible population disaster within the next few decades are basically alarmists.

This *Bulletin* is neither an apology for Catholic teaching on the population dilemma nor a condemnation of the Vatican's position on birth control. It is rather an attempt to investigate the

major positions held by both the Church's authorities and a majority of the faithful vis-à-vis the problems of the demographic revolution now confronting both the Church and the world. To set the stage, we draw on some of the material appearing in the original *Bulletin* which retains its validity as background to both the religious and political values that are the focus of this discussion.

The Demographic Debate

The demographic debate currently occupying world concern first rose to prominence in 1790 when the Venetian monk Gianmaria Ortes reached the conclusion that a zero population growth would eventually prove necessary since infinite expansion was impossible in a finite world. His projections pointed to a doubling of the world's population within a generation of 30 years. An economist by training, Ortes estimated the global population of his day at one billion, only a few million in excess of what modern research has established. He likewise estimated the world's population potential at some three billion, but felt that disease, delayed marriages, infant mortality, and famine would keep the level below that figure.[7]

The Venetian's prognostics were supported by Thomas Malthus in his 1798 *Essay on the Principle of Population.* Malthus maintained that, whereas populations expand by geometric progression (2, 4, 16, 32), food output remains within the confines of arithmetic progression (2, 4, 6, 8, 10). The two churchmen thus highlighted a debate that traced back to the mid-1600s and was the product of a mercantilistic pronatalism that favored large families and deplored celibacy as a principal check to population growth.[8]

The demographic debate continued down to the early 1950s at an academic pace. Then at mid-20th century, the possibly disastrous proportions of accelerating population increase in relation to local and world resources suddenly dawned on a number of concerned individuals, voluntary organizations, and officials involved in government assistance programs.

One result of this new appraisal of the world situation was a shift in objective by foreign aid organizations from assistance to development. This included both international and government organs as well as church-sponsored and voluntary agencies such as U.S. Catholic War Relief Services, World Church Services, and Caritas Internationalis.[9]

At the same time a debate broke out within the Catholic Church over both the right of Catholics to control the size of their families and the methods used to prevent conception. In 1951, under the auspices of Pope Pius XII, the Church, after much debate, accepted the principle that parents could employ the rhythm method of periodic abstinence based on the woman's menstrual cycle, which had been developed during the 1930s, when "for grave reasons" they should not have another child. The discovery of the anovulent pill in the 1950s led to further discussions among the Church's moralists. In 1958, Pius XII decided that the pill was not an acceptable form of birth control since it separated the procreative and "unitive" functions of the conjugal act. This decision set off a controversy that is still racking the Church from within and causing continuing confrontation with the outside world over a fundamental menace to human survival—rapid population increase.

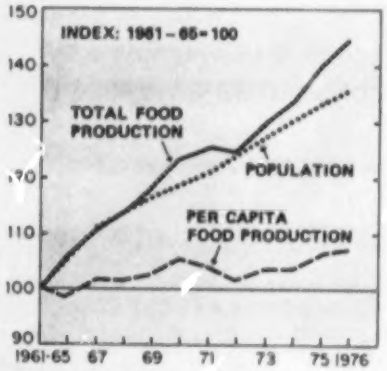
Although the literature on the Catholic Church and birth control is voluminous, many people still have an erroneous understanding of the values and arguments involved in the current debate. Whether loved or despised, as Pope Pius XII told a group of historians in 1955, the Church is still an enormous force for good or evil in the world's well-being. If the

developmentalist hypothesis is valid—that economic improvement induces motivation for small families—the Church's continued opposition to population control could be a fatal obstacle to effective demographic planning. Conversely, if the Church would give vigorous encouragement to effective means of contraception, her influence might be crucial in world development.

(Two long-standing debates are involved here. The first is whether population growth must come down before development can occur or does it take development to bring down birth rates? It is now recognized that this argument is based on a "misconstruing of the relationship between population factors and development," as demographer Phillip Hauser recently put it.[10] Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Indonesia are among the countries that have demonstrated that fertility can be reduced significantly with minimal gains in development and continued high fertility has accompanied admirable increases in national income in Brazil, for example. But "there is also increasing evidence that fertility declines can contribute to development and that development can contribute to lower tempos of population growth," Hauser points out. The second issue is whether fertility declines most rapidly in response to development, which encourages couples to want smaller families, or as a result of strong family planning which make effective contraceptive methods widely available. It is now generally agreed that the two in combination are most effective but that strong family planning programs can have a significant effect on fertility even where development is low by conventional standards.[11])

To understand the issues involved in this complicated social and religious situation, it is necessary to review the Church's traditional insights into the meaning of human sexuality, love, and marriage. The supposition that Catholic doctrine is one constant in an ever-changing world is not entirely correct.

Figure 2. Population Growth and Food Production in Less Developed Countries: 1961-65 to 1976



Sources: Jean van der Tak, Carl Haub, and Elaine Murphy, "Our Population Predicament: A New Look," *Population Bulletin*, Vol. 34, No. 5 (December 1979) Figure 1; United Nations, *Population Trends and Prospects by Country, 1950-2000* (1979).

Food production rose remarkably in many less developed countries during the 1960s and 1970s, but because population increased nearly as fast, the per capita gain in food output was minimal.

While the essentials of the Christian creed and the ten commandments have retained their immobility, the explanations of the Church's beliefs have shifted with the cultural patterns of the ages.

The one area where an almost inviolable ban has been observed has been in the prohibition, as an evil, of artificial birth control. Pope Paul VI reiterated this traditional teaching in his 1968 Encyclical, *Humanae vitae*, and later refused to budge despite the furor caused by that decision. John Paul II, his successor (after John Paul I who died within a month of becoming Pope), has proven to be equally—if not more—staunch in his insistence that the ban must be upheld.

Though many individuals and people today regard sex as a purely personal matter, the Catholic Church is not alone

in holding that the use of sex must be regulated in view of one's relationship with God and hence that guidance from religious leaders is not merely appropriate but necessary. Not everyone attaches the same importance to achieving certitude in religious and ethical judgments as does the Catholic Church. Nevertheless, the majority of mankind does acknowledge religious sanctions for human conduct, and up to contemporary times most peoples considered conception and birth within the sphere of the sacred. The current controversy over the use of contraceptives brought into renewed focus by the Catholic Church is an attempt on the part of millions of its serious-minded faithful to discover the truth about a moral value: What is God's will in the matter of birth control? Unless this premise is understood, the debate has little meaning.

Pontificia Fotografia/Felici

Pope Paul VI.

Papal perspectives on population issues

Of all the organizations intimately involved in the problems of human life and development, the Roman Catholic Church has adopted an approach to the population problem that is both enigmatic and controversial. Since at least the end of World War II, it has used the vast resources of its faithful in the "First World" to bring aid and development programs to downtrodden peoples in every accessible country of the globe. And in its more recent teaching on political, economic, and social justice, the Catholic Church has taken a radical stand, condemning both the predatory enterprises of capitalism and the equally inhuman dictatorships of dialectical materialism.[12]

Nevertheless, in its direct approach to the threat of overpopulation, its leadership seems caught in an unresolvable dilemma. On three important occasions, Pope Paul VI made statements that shocked not only the outside world but also many of his own constituents concerned with demographic problems. Before the United Nations General Assembly on October 4, 1964, in New York, he spoke of an "irrational control of births preventing the access of new mouths at the banquet of the Lord." In 1970, speaking to the Food and Agriculture Organization conference in Rome, he made a similar reference. (However, in his 1971 FAO speech, the Pope also mentioned a "rational control of births.") Then, addressing the UN World Food Conference in November 1974, he cautioned against population policies that were aimed at "preventing the poor from being born."

A *New York Times* editorial characterized the Pope's 1974 speech as "half-baked moralisms."[13] Actually, that speech was a balanced analysis of the extremely complex factors involved in the current demographic situation. In agreement with many population and food experts, Pope Paul emphasized that population policies and birth control are not the only answer to the present impasse or the apocalyptic consequences of a then projected doubling of the world's population by the year 2000. In accord with some social planners, he saw the solution in a total reordering of

11

the world's political economy—a radical approach that appeared to put him on the side of the socialist nations at both the World Population Conference and the World Food Conference of 1974.

Revealing a detailed knowledge of world hunger, Pope Paul recognized the limits of the green revolution, notably its dependence on fertilizer, now affected by inflationary prices, and drew attention to the great injustices involved in the maldistribution of world resources. He made concrete suggestions for the development of global agriculture and affirmed the need for an international stockpile of food reserves. He showed a deeply sympathetic understanding of the damage wrought by malnutrition on bodies and minds and expressed horror at the prospect of the millions facing starvation. After all this, however, he still could not see the need for population control. "Will men bind themselves obstinately to their proper destiny," he asked, "and search for alibis, for example, an unreasonable and unilateral action against demographic growth instead of going to the essential?"[14]

Behind Pope Paul's animadversions was his belief, bordering on the mystical, that as the spiritual leader of perhaps a sixth of the world's population he had to witness to the absolute sanctity of human life. He saw the current breakdown of the older Christian morality in the pornographic and sex revolution, the abortion movement, and the legitimization of homosexuality. He was convinced that what he termed a "contraceptive mentality" was aimed at the denigration of human life—a return of Manichaeism. For this reason he felt bound to hold hard to the line on birth control.

Unlike Pope Paul, John Paul II has so far not addressed the population problem directly, although he has defended human rights and expressed deep concern for the millions of poor in developing countries on innumerable occasions in his first two and a half years in office. To him, as with Pope Paul, upholding the Church's ban on artificial means of birth control is a mandate "entrusted to us [the Pope] by Christ" that is more sacred than ever amid today's "onslaughts of materialism, rampant secularism and moral permissiveness."[15]

In condemning birth control, Paul and John Paul have witnessed to a tradition that goes back to the Church's origins.

Traditional Church Teaching

The early Christian Church

Sexual dissipation characterized the Later Roman Empire of the Greco-Roman civilization in which the Christian Church had its beginnings. To survive in the face of "pagan vices," the Church had to insist on the value of life and its transmission, and the positive aspects of love and human dignity. It was also called upon to oppose zealots of Gnostic sects both inside and outside the Church who viewed the world's creator as a god of evil, claimed an absolute freedom from moral law, and repudiated procreation as a wicked perpetuation of the material world. These attitudes are attacked in the New Testament and in the works of the second-century Bishop Irenaeus of Lyons, and elicited a positive approach to procreation and marriage from Clement of Alexandria and the first Christian school of theology.

In reaction to the Gnostic prohibition of procreation (either through total sexual abstinence or extreme libertarianism that separated intercourse from procreation), Clement insisted that procreation was not merely good but sacred since it furthered the work of God, the supreme Creator. He borrowed the Stoic ethic which regarded procreation as the sole lawful reason for conjugal intercourse. Considering man's passions and emotions as strictly distractions from his intellectual pursuits—the contemplation of the One, the True, the Good, and the Beautiful—the Stoics justified marriage and sexual indulgence as obligations

connected with the need to continue the human race. This general attitude was adopted by the early Fathers of the Christian Church and became the dominant opinion of medieval theologians. Thus, from the beginning, contraception was looked upon as an evil since it violated the primary purpose of marital intercourse and called into question the legitimacy of procreation.[16]

Augustine, the great fifth-century Christian convert, introduced a dour note into the Christian attitude toward sex in his controversies with the theologian Pelagius. Pelagius maintained—as the French freethinker Jean Jacques Rousseau did a millenium later—that man's sexual propensities were due mainly to the bad example received from his elders during infancy and childhood. Augustine, apparently influenced by his own sexual excesses as a member during his early manhood of the Gnostic sect of Manichees, countered pessimistically that human concupiscence stemmed from the original sin of Adam and was passed through the male seed. He also seemed to believe unwittingly that the male seed contained the new life and that to interfere with its deposit in the woman's body was a form of abortion or murder. In condemning contraception as an evil, Augustine cited Onan of the Old Testament who was struck dead by God for the sin of spilling his seed on the ground to avoid impregnating his dead brother's wife. Contraceptive practices thus became known in Catholic moral thought as the sin of Onan, or Onanism.[17]

The early churchmen's condemnation of contraception seems to have had another motivation. St. Paul in First Corinthians asserted the fundamental equality of the spouses in sexual matters and thus affirmed the personal dignity of the wife. Though contraception was not mentioned explicitly in the list of sexual aberrations he condemned as evil, its practice was usually associated with fornication, or adultery; hence its prohibition as unnatural could be considered a defense of marital fidelity. This is definitely Augustine's view in his treatise *Marriage and Concupiscence.*

The Middle Ages

By the sixth century, Church teaching agreed that, while conjugal intercourse was good and certainly legitimate, it contained dangers of too great a distraction from man's ultimate purpose which was the contemplation of Almighty God through prayer and pious meditation. Hence the pleasure motive as such could only be justified by a direct intention to procreate. Clement of Alexandria even insisted that the Holy Spirit absented himself from the soul during the climax of conjugal intercourse.

During the next thousand years, a slow but considerable evolution took place. Gradually marital intercourse was sanctioned for the pregnant, aged couples, and the sterile. Eventually, in the 20th century, it was admitted that it could be legitimate without a procreative intent. Thus the pleasure motive came to be seen as justifiable in itself and not merely as an incentive for continuing the human race.

Meanwhile, down the centuries, ordinary Christians tended to consider themselves second-class citizens of the Church. While they accepted the official teaching that marital relations were somehow tainted (by their role in the transmission of original sin and sexual concupiscence), their lifestyle, folklore, and entertainments exhibited an almost total disregard of marital ideals preached from the pulpit. However, contraception was hardly an issue. Ordinary people lacked knowledge of contraceptive methods to begin with, and they needed a plentiful progeny to assure the survival of one or more children to provide for their old age.

As the Church's teaching developed during the Middle Ages, confrontation with several Manichean sects—the Bogomils of Bulgaria, the Cathars in Western Europe, and the Albigensians

in France, among others—promoted a repeated insistence on the goodness of procreation and evil of contraception. Pope Gregory X enacted the first papal legislation against contraception in 1272, declaring null and void a marriage entered into with a condition to avoid offspring. And an ancient canon was quoted in the Decretals of Gratian (circa 1150) to the effect that it was homicide to prevent generation or to cause sterility.[18]

Although the Catholic Church has long been considered the proponent of large families, this ideal was a concoction of the 19th century. In the early and medieval Church, virginity outside marriage and continence in marriage were considered higher ideals than procreation. Nevertheless, the Church had inherited from Judaism the tradition that numerous offspring were a sign of divine blessing and extolled in popular preaching and liturgical prayers surrounding marriage the generosity involved in having a large progeny. It was not difficult to convince people of this ideal in an age when infant mortality was the rule rather than the exception.

The Phenomenon of Birth Control

The controversy over birth control as a problem is comparatively recent. The practice of contraception on a large scale began in France, spreading from the upper classes in the late 17th century to the masses of rural peasants by the last quarter of the 18th century.[19] Between 1750 and 1800 the French birth rate dropped by 17 percent, a decline described by demographer Alfred Sauvy as "the most important fact in all France's history." Since there was no public advocacy of the practice, the birth rate decline resulted from an extensive series of individual decisions to limit births. Catholic theology was in a disastrous state following the French Revolution, and the Church was ill equipped to cope with the situation. Roman authorities, called on to take a stand on the growing practice of birth control, restated the traditional teaching but their statements showed no great concern and were marked by tolerance and sympathy for the faithful.[20]

The birth control movement

The first upsurge of birth limitation in France had no organized theoretical underpinnings. But with the rise of the birth control movement in the 19th century, especially in England and the United States, the Church, for the first time since the 12th century revival of Manichaeism, was confronted with people systematically teaching that birth prevention was good. Unlike the 12th century Cathars, the new advocates of contraception were not opposed to all procreation but only to uncontrolled procreation. The motives proposed were economic, medical, social, and moral. With effective mechanical and chemical means still undiscovered, the most widely used contraceptive method seems to have been coitus interruptus. Inexpensive condoms became available only after the vulcanization of rubber was invented in 1843.

Leaders in the movement were the Englishmen Jeremy Bentham, James Mill, and Francis Place; their American counterparts Robert Dale Owen and Charles Knowlton; and Aleta Jacobs, Holland's first woman doctor.[21] Francis Place, founder of the movement in England, was a tailor, labor leader, and father of 15 children. He considered the moral restraint urged by Malthus (late marriage and celibacy) an absurdity and adopted a contraceptive attitude that came to be called neo-Malthusianism.

George Drysdale, an American physician, maintained that only by contraception could society escape the three primary social evils: poverty, prostitution, and celibacy. Meanwhile, Anthony Comstock, a Congregationalist, engineered passage of the Comstock Law which closed the U.S. postal service to

contraceptive literature and devices and prohibited their importation from England. The 1873 trial of the physician Edward Bliss Foote for contravention of this law served to greatly publicize the whole issue of birth control. Four years later in England, the notoriety attending the trial of Charles Bradlaugh and Annie Besant for disseminating a pamphlet advocating douching as a contraceptive method, originally published by Charles Knowlton in the U.S., prompted wide circulation of the treatise and apparently contributed to a decline in the British birth rate.

Response of the Catholic Church, 1879-1930

Faced with an unprecedented international movement and with birth rates falling in many countries, the Catholic hierarchy reacted vigorously. The reaction came in the form of pastoral letters by bishops, statements from Roman authorities, writings of theologians, and more explicit preaching and instructions to the people. Catholic preachers against birth control felt they were dealing with an act that was intrinsically evil. Hence they disparaged the genuineness of personal and social motives and claimed selfishness, materialism, and a desire for luxury as the reasons for recourse to contraceptive practices. Birth control was portrayed as a hedonistic indulgence in mutual masturbation.

The opposition to birth control spawned the idea that the Church officially favored large families. Producing a multitude of offspring had not been considered virtuous in itself. However, avoiding the sin of birth control and providing for many children did entail sacrifice and virtue, and so large families came to be praised and blessed. If spouses doubted their ability to care for more children and could not face up to abstinence, they were advised to run the risk of pregnancy and trust in divine providence. If pregnancy involved danger for the wife, the only option was heroic continence.

The typical response to the objection that this was an incomprehensibly harsh teaching was that of Arthur Vermeersch, the Belgian Jesuit who dominated Catholic moral teaching for many years and was largely responsible for drafting Pope Pius XI's Encyclical *Casti connubii* of 1930. "Why should it be astonishing that conjugal chastity, like all the Christian virtues, claims its martyrs?" Christ had suffered and the necessity of suffering for salvation is an integral theme of the Christian message. Spouses in the anguished conflict between the desire to make love and the fear of having too many children were told to bear their cross by abstaining from intercourse.[22]

Pope Pius XI's Encyclical *Casti connubii* of December 31, 1930, reaffirmed Church teaching that procreation was the primary end of marriage and gave hard reformulation to the condemnation of contraceptives:

"Any use whatsoever of matrimony exercised in such a way that the act is frustrated in its natural power to guarantee life is an offense against the law of God and of nature, and those who indulge in such are branded with the guilt of grave sin."

However, the Pope did uphold the legitimacy of periodic abstinence (rhythm) under certain circumstances as a means of child-spacing and family limitation:

"Nor are these to be considered as acting against nature who in the married state use their right in the proper manner, although on account of natural reasons, either of time or of certain defects, new life cannot be brought forth."

This teaching was reaffirmed in 1951 by Pope Pius XII.[23]

Margaret Sanger

In the early 20th century it was Margaret Sanger, a public health nurse and ori-

Seaman family album

Before the late 19th century, the Catholic Church did not officially view producing numerous offspring as a virtue in itself. However, avoiding the sin of birth control and providing for many children did entail sacrifice and virtue and so large families came to be praised and blessed.

ginally a Catholic, who was the most effective proponent of birth control. From her experiences among the poor of New York's East Side, she was convinced that birth control was the only realistic solution to the horrors of life experienced by the urban destitute.

In 1921 she organized the first major birth control conference in New York City and was jailed overnight by the police at the instigation of Archbishop Patrick Hayes. The accompanying publicity aided her efforts to launch a worldwide campaign, which began in Japan, China, Hawaii, and India and led to the formation of numerous leagues and associations for the spread of contraceptive information and devices.

Unwittingly, the Catholic Church in the U.S. had elevated Margaret Sanger into a prominence that enabled her to defy its teachings even in many parts of the world where the Church's influence was considered almost absolute.[24]

United Nations

Official Catholic intransigence on birth control helped delay direct involvement of the United Nations in family planning programs until the mid-1960s. During the 1950s, UN agencies such as the World Health Organization (WHO), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), the Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and the UN Statistical Office began population-related research and data collection. But proposals in the General Assembly that the UN become involved in introducing national family planning programs were consistently opposed by delegates from Roman Catholic and Communist countries. A projected WHO study of contraception in 1952 was opposed by Catholic delegates and eventually abandoned. Instead, a program to teach the rhythm method was undertaken in India and failed abysmally.

At the UN World Population Conference in Rome in 1954, it was agreed that cooperative action by members required respect for different ethical and religious values and the promotion of "mutual understanding" in regard to population problems.[25]

A 1962 General Assembly debate on population growth and economic development ended with the decision that the UN role should be confined to the monitoring of national population policies. In 1963, delegates from France, Argentina, Liberia, and Peru forced deletion from a General Assembly resolution of a clause authorizing UN assistance for "national projects and programs dealing with problems of population." And at the UN World Population Conference in Belgrade in 1965, the undersecretary for economic and social affairs reiterated the policy of UN neutrality "out of respect for all beliefs."[26]

But then the climate began to change. One General Assembly resolution in 1966 called on UN member nations to "assist" in training, research information, and advisory services in the field of population. Another on December 17 of that year stated that the family was entitled to decide freely and responsibly concerning the number and spacing of its own children. This action followed a declaration by 12 heads of states on Human Rights Day in October 1966, proclaiming "the opportunity for individuals to decide the number and spacing of their children as a basic right."[27] Although the resolution and the declaration were stimulated by interested voluntary agencies, there is little doubt that the decision to make them was influenced by the favorable attitude toward family planning expressed in the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, issued by Vatican Council II in 1966 at the end of its three years of deliberations.

The principles developed in the United Nations over the two decades of its concern with world population and family problems acknowledge a legitimate variety of goals in population policies. Some nations are satisfied with their current levels of population growth. A few are seeking increases. Still others are strenuously working to reduce fertility in the hope of achieving social and economic development. While some countries are concerned more with problems of sterility and subfecundity, the majority seem most anxious to control fertility and to persuade their people to reduce human reproduction to fit current and potential food and energy supplies.

The UN accomplishment in hammering out a detailed list of human rights with regard to the family and human reproduction is remarkable. There seems to be an obvious connection between its declarations and the insistence of Pope John XXIII in *Pacem in terris* (1963) on human dignity as the foundation of human rights. The UN approach to the population problem is founded on its 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights which asserts that men and women "have the right to marry and found a family." Relevant rights and responsibilities are thus located in the family, which as "the natural and fundamental group unit of society . . . is entitled to protection by society and the state." This doctrine also acknowledges diversity in the concept of the family. In many developing countries, both Catholic and non-Catholic, and increasingly in some developed countries, a large portion of the female population enters into more or less permanent consensual unions or casual "visiting" arrangements in which childbearing is accepted.

UN documents also indicate that the responsibility for children involves both parents, although the impact falls more directly on the woman who bears the child and the brunt of its care in infancy and childhood. In clarifying women's rights, the UN explicitly asserts the equality of the wife with the husband. This recognition contradicts ancient and traditional customs whereby men prevailed in decisions affecting the family.[28]

The Church and women's rights

The UN insistence on the equality of men and women within marriage is echoed in the official Catholic teaching pronounced in the "Message to Christian Families in the Modern World" issued at the close of the 1980 Synod of Bishops:

> "Husband and wife are certainly different, but they are also equal. The difference should be respected but never used to justify the domination of one by the other. In collaboration with society, the church must effectively affirm and defend the dignity and rights of women."

Vatican Council II in the early 1960s had focused attention on the situation of women in the Church and given impetus to the Catholic wing of the women's liberation movement. Since then, the emancipation of women from "Kirche, Küche, und Kinder" and their involvement in activities outside the home and in policymaking and official positions in the Roman Catholic Church itself have been slowly acknowledged.[29] The effect on Catholic family structure and fertility is substantial. Clearly, Catholic women, like their non-Catholic counterparts, are increasingly exercising independent judgment with regard to numbers and spacing of their children.

U.S. Catholic fertility behavior

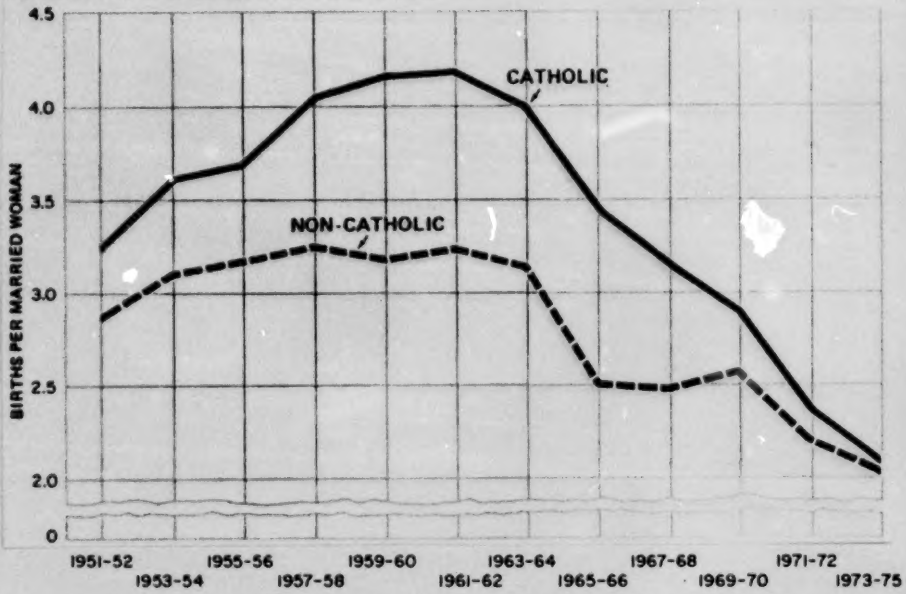
While official Catholic doctrine has remained unwaveringly opposed since 1930 to all but the rhythm method of contraception, wide swings have occurred in U.S. Catholic fertility and contraceptive behavior. During the depression years of the 1930s, Catholic fertility fell nearly as low as that of non-Catholics, prompting demographers of the time to predict the eventual end of traditionally higher Catholic fertility.[30] In a recent retrospective study of women born between 1900 and 1910 (and thus in their prime childbearing years in the 1930s), 60 percent of the Catholics reported having practiced some form of birth control (including rhythm and abstinence) at some time in their lives, compared to 74 percent among the non-Catholics interviewed.[31] Among these contraceptors, 64 percent of Catholics and 87 percent of non-Catholics had used a "modern" method (condom, diaphragm, jelly or cream, suppositories, vaginal cup, or sterilization to prevent pregnancy).

The demographers' predictions were confounded following World War II as Catholic fertility rose more rapidly than that of non-Catholics during the 1947-64 baby boom. A turning point came again in the mid-1960s, however, and, by the mid-1970s, Catholic and non-Catholic marital fertility rates had nearly converged at low levels. Currently, U.S. demographers are once again heralding the imminent "end of 'Catholic'" fertility.[32] Data from a series of national surveys at five-year intervals from 1955 to 1975 illustrate these trends (see Figure 3, next page).

The trend since 1965 reflects a radical change in U.S. Catholic contraceptive behavior as seen in Table 1 (page 17). Among currently married white women under age 45, the proportion of Catholics using any form of contraception rose from 58.5 percent in 1965 to 76.4 percent in 1975, narrowing the Catholic/non-Catholic differential in current contraceptive use from 11.5 to 3.5 percentage points in just those ten years. Catholic reliance on rhythm—the only Church-approved method other than abstinence—fell from 31.8 percent of all contraceptors to 5.9 percent. By 1975, Catholic contraceptors' use of the pill (34.2 percent) was virtually identical to that of non-Catholic married women (34.3 percent).

What accounts for this sudden disappearance of U.S. Catholic/non-Catholic differentials during the ten years which included the reaffirmation of the Church ban on artificial means of birth control in the Encyclical *Humanae vitae*? Demographer Leon Bouvier attributes it

Figure 3. Total Marital Fertility Rates for U.S. Catholics and Non-Catholics: 1951-1975



Source: Charles F. Westoff and Elise F. Jones, "The End of 'Catholic' Fertility," *Demography*, Vol. 16, No. 2 (May 1979) Fig. 2, p. 214, based on data from the Growth of American Families studies of 1955 and 1960 and the National Fertility Surveys of 1965, 1970, and 1975.

Note: The Total Marital Fertility Rate used here indicates the average number of children a married woman would have after 15 years of marriage if she were to bear children at the same rate as women of different "marriage durations" actually did in the specified two-year time periods.

generally to the on-going assimilation of Roman Catholics into the mainstream of American culture and society.[33] He writes: "Catholics are no longer a psychological minority always being challenged to prove their beliefs through regular church attendance and the production of large families." In 1971, Gerhard Lenski claimed it was because Vatican Council II had revolutionized Catholic thinking and legitimized dissent.[34] In 1979, Charles Westoff and Elise Jones suggested:

"The sharp decline of Catholic fertility that began in earnest around 1963-64 was most likely facilitated by moral ambiguity surrounding the oral contraceptive. For several years, there was an atmosphere of belief that the Vatican would change the traditional stance and that the pill would be rationalized as a regulator of the ovulatory cycle. By the time that the Papal Encyclical of 1968 reaffirmed the traditional teaching of the church, about a third of its [U.S.] members were using the pill. Although the Encyclical formally ended the debate, the door had been opened for many Catholics and there was no turning back. In fact, the Encyclical undoubtedly produced a weakening of the authority of the church."[35]

U.S. Catholic clergy were cautiously sympathetic. In 1969, a national survey of 969 parish priests revealed that just under half of them (49 percent) considered contraceptive use of the pill as "always evil."[36] However, nearly two-thirds (64 percent) said they would not

Table 1. Current Contraceptive Practice of White Catholic and Non-Catholic Married Women Under Age 45: United States, 1965, 1970, 1975

	1965		1970		1975	
Contraceptive practice	Catholic	Non-Catholic	Catholic	Non-Catholic	Catholic	Non-Catholic
Total number in survey sample	851	1,975	1,004	2,780	895	2,434
Percent total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Using contraception	58.5	70.0	63.2	69.2	76.4	79.9
Not using contraception	41.5	30.0	36.8	30.8	23.6	20.1
Number of users	505	1,396	635	1,923	679	1,938
Percent total users	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Wife sterilized	2.5	5.5	4.6	7.5	12.9	17.5
Husband sterilized	1.3	5.1	3.6	8.3	13.1	15.6
Pill	21.8	30.7	33.1	36.2	34.2	34.3
IUD	0.8	1.2	8.8	7.1	7.6	9.0
Diaphragm	4.2	12.8	3.5	6.5	3.5	4.1
Condom	18.3	23.4	13.2	15.3	14.9	9.6
Coitus interruptus	5.7	3.4	3.5	2.0	2.4	1.8
Foam	2.2	3.4	6.3	6.7	2.6	3.9
Rhythm	31.8	4.2	17.8	3.6	5.9	1.7
Douche	3.2	3.5	1.6	2.5	0.3	0.5
Other	8.1	6.7	4.1	4.4	2.6	2.0

Source: Charles F. Westoff and Elise F. Jones, "The Secularization of U.S. Catholic Birth Control Practices," *Family Planning Perspectives*, Vol. 9, No. 5 (September/October 1977) Table 3, p. 204.

advise a couple on the pill to receive Holy Communion without first going to confession. (In Catholic practice, a person who is conscious of having committed a serious sin is usually required to confess it to a priest before he or she can licitly receive Holy Communion.)

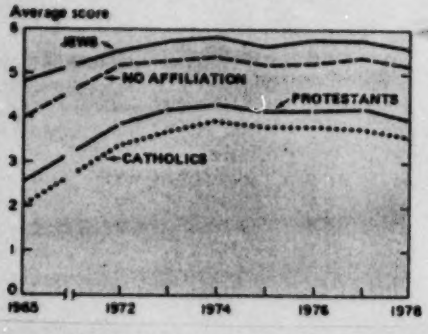
Abortion attitudes

Although Catholics remain more opposed to abortion than other broad religious groups in the United States, their attitudes have paralleled the general trend. Based on a series of surveys by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) of the University of Chicago, Figure 4 shows that approval of abortion rose among Catholics as well as Protestants, Jews, and the non-affiliated from 1965 to 1974—the year following the Supreme Court legalization of abortion—and then leveled off to 1978. The leveling off is undoubtedly due in part to the growing Right-to-Life movement in the U.S. as in other countries and also—for faithful Catholics—to the Church's increasingly frequent reiteration of its hard line against abortion. Further analysis of these data shows that the leveling off is almost entirely due to a sharp rise in abortion disapproval since 1975 by frequent church attenders among Catholics, Baptists, and other fundamentalist Protestant denominations.[37]

Many supporters of a woman's right to abortion feel abortion is the lesser of two evils when compared to bringing unwanted or defective children into the world. While they would prefer to have people use contraceptive means, they feel that abortion should be available as a backup for accidents that result in unwanted pregnancies.

Although the Catholic Church remains unalterably opposed to abortion, a nuanced attitude toward its supporters is

Figure 4. Approval of Abortion Among Catholics, Protestants, Jews, and Non-Church-Affiliated: United States, 1965-1978



Source: Donald Granberg and Beth Wellman Granberg, "Abortion Attitudes, 1965-1980: Trends and Determinants," *Family Planning Perspectives*, Vol. 12, No. 5 (September/October 1980) Fig. 1, p. 256.

Note: The lines indicate the average number of "yes" responses to six situations where respondents were asked if they thought it "should be possible for a pregnant woman to obtain a *legal* abortion." The situations ranged from "the pregnancy seriously endangers the woman's health" to "A woman, although married, is unwilling to have any more children."

being suggested by many Catholic thinkers. Vatican Council II, in its Decree of Ecumenism and its Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World suggested that the Church was beginning to acknowledge a legitimate pluralism on public issues. This was supported by Pope Paul's words in his Apostolic Letter *Octogesima adveniente* of May 14, 1971:

"In concrete situations . . . one must recognize a legitimate variety of opinions . . . From all Christians who at first sight find themselves in opposition as a result of starting from different options [the Church] asks an effort of mutual understanding of the other's position amd motives."

Awareness of this development is gradually penetrating Catholic thinking, so that the faithful can respect their opponents on abortion and similar issues, and while continuing discussions in the hope of achieving a better appreciation of each other's viewpoint, they can continue to cooperate in confronting the larger issue of population control and the social and economic development essential to its achievement.

Teachings of other churches

Opposition to birth control was almost total among religious societies until 1930. Among Jews and Christians generally, the Old Testament condemnation of Onan was interpreted as a strict prohibition of artificial birth control. First approval came from the Universalists, the Unitarians, and adherents of Reformed Judaism. Then, in 1930, the Lambeth Conference of the Church of England recognized abstinence as the ordinary means for limiting births but allowed contraceptive methods where abstinence proved impossible. In 1931, the Committee on Marriage and Home of the Federal Council of Churches in the U.S. approved a "careful and restrained" use of contraceptive devices. This precedent was gradually accepted by all major Protestant denominations with the exception of some Lutheran and most fundamentalist churches. In 1930, the Central Conference of American Rabbis (Reformed) approved contraceptive practices for economic, social, and health reasons. This example was followed by the Conservative Rabbinical Assembly in 1935, and by the Rabbinical Alliance in 1958.

Opinions are mixed on how birth control teaching has developed within Islam, the world's major religion after Christianity. The traditional view is that, because Mohammed counseled his followers to be fruitful and multiply, most Muslims were—and still are—disposed to believe that having children is up to Allah. But some scholars point to reports indicating that coitus interruptus "was both approved by the Prophet Muhammed and practiced by his followers

during his lifetime."[38] Down the centuries, Islamic literature has discussed and generally approved of coitus interruptus, although usually in regard to extramarital relations, and Muslim physicians in the Middle Ages and earlier perfected and recommended methods that were forerunners of today's IUD, suppositories, foam, and diaphragm. In 1971 the Conference on Islam and Family Planning, held in Rabat, approved "spouses'" use of "all safe and lawful" contraceptives. Customs that repressed and segregated women appear to have hindered family planning more than presumed religious disapproval of contraception. For a woman in traditional Muslim societies, for example, both social and personal modesty prevents the exposure of her body to any man but her husband and there is great reluctance to submit to physical examination by even a woman doctor.

Hindu and Buddhist traditions have no religious preconceptions with regard to fertility but, until recently, both have favored a plentiful progeny controlled by the extended family structure.

The Love Ethic

Roman Catholic teaching on birth control has been shaped by the Christian ethic regarding marriage and the family. Through the centuries, the preservation of the family as an institution was given precedence over all personal rights of the marriage partners. Marital love was discounted and the emphasis placed instead on the conjugal obligations termed by Augustine as *prolis, fides et sacramentum*—offspring, fidelity, and sacrament. (The sacrament was considered fulfilled by the marriage ceremony and completion of the coital act.)

These obligations fell most heavily on women. Most women in the Christian tradition were taught that there was something distasteful about sex. They had to submit to their husband's advances with some regularity to keep peace in the household and beget children. Few Christian wives, even the educated ones, had any idea that, biologically, the sex act was made for women. St. Paul's injunction "Husbands love your wives as Christ loves the Church" was interpreted in a mystical sense, divorced from any connection with conjugal affection and coital satisfaction.

Change in the official teaching began with Pope Pius XI's Encyclical *Casti connubii* of 1930 which developed an ethic of love between the spouses as essential to the proper ordering of marriage, although it vigorously condemned artificial birth control. This teaching was developed by "personalist" theologians led by Dom Hubert Doms in his book *The Meaning and End of Marriage*, published in 1934. For Doms, the meaning of marriage was the realization of unity by two persons—the scriptural two-in-oneness. The specific end was the child. He argued that both are equally valid.

Roman theologians reacted unfavorably to this notion. In 1944 the Holy Office declared as still obligatory the traditional Church teaching that procreation is the primary end of marriage and personalistic values and satisfaction only secondary. In 1944 also, Pope Pius XII said:

> "If the exclusive aim of nature or at least its primary intent had been the mutual giving and possessing of husband and wife in pleasure and delight; if nature had arranged that act only to make their personal experience joyous in the highest degree, and not as an incentive in the service of life; then the Creator would have made use of another plan in the formation of the marital act."[39]

In 1951, however, Pius XII declared in a talk to Italian midwives that parents' sexual activities as personal expressions of love and mutual surrender are valuable beyond procreation. Vatican Council II, in the 1960s, abandoned the terminology of "primary" and "secondary" and declared:

> "[Conjugal] love is uniquely expressed and perfected within the marital act. The actions within marriage by which a couple are united intimately and chastely are noble and worthy

ones. Expressed in a manner that is truly human these actions signify and promote the mutual giving by which the spouses enrich each other with a joyful and thankful will."[40]

Fifteen years after this pronouncement, sexophobia seems to have resurfaced within the Church hierarchy. Despite Pope John Paul's attempts in weekly audiences to stress the personal rather than procreative aspect of married love, the result of the 1980 Synod of Bishops has been an attempt to restore the notion of procreation as the primary end of marriage to its pre-Vatican II prominence.[41]

Rhythm and the Pill

It was in the context of the Church's growing emphasis on personalistic values in marriage that Pope Pius XII in 1951 approved the rhythm method as a legitimate means of preventing a pregnancy that would interfere with the family well-being. He taught that using the rhythm method without a serious reason was sinful, but he explicitly recognized medical, eugenic, economic, and social factors as worthy motives.

The Pope's words and attitude symbolized a new spirit. In effect he approved the humane reasons advanced by the birth control advocates now that a method was available that he viewed as consistent with Catholic moral principles. The rhythm method was held to be different from other methods in that it consisted in *not* performing an act to interfere with conception. Refraining from intercourse during the period when the woman was most likely to conceive (the few days surrounding ovulation) was viewed as the nonplacing of an act rather than a positive interference with an act in progress.[42]

The pill

Contraceptive pills first became available commercially in the late 1950s and immediately entered into the Catholic birth control debate. From 1957 the theologians' focus was on the pill as an anovulant, i.e., a substance which prevented conception by postponing or preventing ovulation.

Their first reaction was to reject the pill as contraceptive and sterilizing. However, further consideration caused them to conclude that its use for therapeutic reasons could be approved. Since theologians generally had already permitted sterilizing surgery on pathological organs—such as removal of the fallopian tube in an ectopic gestation or of a diseased womb—a principle was available for permitting the sterilization caused by the pill if the direct intention was for medical purposes. The contraceptive effect, though foreseen, was not directly intended but permitted. Thus, the anovulant pill was approved for treatment of endometriosis (infection of the uterus), excessive menstrual bleeding, and similar maladies.

But what of cases where the pill was to be used to regularize the menstrual cycle with a view to predicting the time of ovulation? There were two types of cases. One was that of the couple who wished to regularize the menstrual cycle in order to conceive. Few theologians opposed using the pill for this purpose. Another situation would be to take advantage of the safety injected into the rhythm method of birth control. After some hesitation, the theologians tended to agree that it was legitimate to use the pill to support rhythm. Like using the pill to treat endometriosis, this would be an effort to correct the defects of nature and not an interference with nature.

Unconvinced by this theorizing, Pius XII in 1958 disapproved use of the pill as a contraceptive. For four years most theologians accepted this position, contending that contraceptive use of the pill was an immoral interference with the generative process.[43]

However, cracks developed in this reasoning. For centuries contraception itself had been condemned as immoral. All forms of birth control known before

the pill (coitus interruptus and mechanical and chemical means) were judged to be morally evil. But since the theologians and the Pope himself now allowed use of anovulants to treat pathologies and regulate the menstrual cycle, the act itself of using them could not be logically judged as intrinsically evil. So if using the pill to prevent conception was immoral, the moral specification of the act must come, not from the act itself, but from the intention of the user.

However, a deliberate intention of avoiding conception was not always immoral, for Pius XII had explicitly approved the rhythm method for that purpose. Why, then, was it not lawful to suppress ovulation without recourse to rhythm? If pregnancy could legitimately be avoided by the pill plus rhythm, why not by pill alone? Such questions did not receive staisfactory answers.

Further arguments

Obviously influenced by fear of the population explosion and by the realization that in many societies children were no longer an asset but an economic liability, Catholic thinkers not directly involved in the pill debate were asking whether the Church's teaching on contraception might not be changed to fit conditions of modern life. Some argued that a newer understanding of mankind and his control over his biological nature required a revision of the Church's interpretation of the natural law and its requirements. While refraining from interfering in the debate and reaffirming the traditional prohibition, Pope John XXIII (who had succeeded Pius XII in 1958) in 1962 appointed a small committee of theologians to consider the problem in the context of family life.

In 1963 John Rock, an American Catholic physician who had been a leading developer of the pill, published *The Time Has Come* in which he contended that the use of anovulants was equivalent to a "pill-established safe period, and would seem to carry the same moral specifications." He pointed out that during pregnancy ovulation is naturally inhibited by secretions of progesterone and nature thus prevents a new pregnancy from endangering the existing fetus. Why should man not imitate nature by inhibiting ovulation when a new pregnancy could endanger the existing offspring?

Most theologians rejected Rock's reasoning. But some European theologians and bishops were convinced that this justified direct use of the pill to regulate births.

In an article also published in 1963, Louis Janssens of the University of Louvain argued that placing a temporal obstacle to procreation by using the rhythm method is no less an interference with the natural generative process than placing a spatial obstacle by using the anovulant pill.[44] From there it was a logical step to the question being asked in ever-widening circles: "What is the difference between rhythm and any other method of birth control?" Since rhythm is a nuisance at best and ineffective at worst, the question was extremely real for conscientious Catholics. But to accept Janssens' argument had grave implications from the Church's point of view, for his analysis implied that many forms of birth control could not logically be forbidden and that the age-old prohibition was an error.

In 1964, John's successor, Pope Paul VI, announced establishment of a twofold Commission for the Study of Population and Family Life to study the question. This consisted of a group of cardinals and bishops led by Cardinal Alfredo Ottaviani and a group of what were eventually 64 experts—theologians, physicians, demographers, and family counsellors—who reported to the cardinals and bishops.

Asking that the status quo be preserved meanwhile and refraining from directly condemning the pill, Paul set about on his own to consult experts on every aspect of the problem around the world, including Soviet Russia. At the same time, in theory and practice, there

was a growing acceptance of the pill in Catholic circles. Increasingly it was thought that the question was open on the pill and that opening grew larger and larger until Pope Paul tried to close it in his Encyclical in 1968.[45]

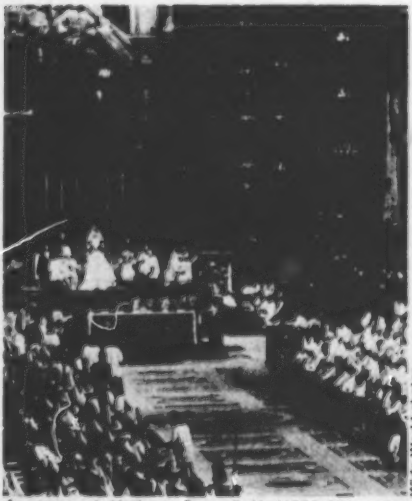
A Reorientation of Moral Thinking

In the period following World War II a call was sounded to reorientate the Church's moral teaching on all issues of human life. German and French theologians in particular sought new ways to accommodate the Church's traditional attitudes to new philosophies and lifestyles and a concrete model for the new approach was provided by Bernard Häring in *The Law of Christ*, published in 1954.

It was in this vein that Pope John XXIII in 1962 launched Vatican Council II—a series of four annual sessions of discussions among some 2,500 bishops gathered in Rome, each lasting about two months, which continued under Pope Paul after John's death in June 1963.

Vatican Council II

In a real sense, the whole of Vatican II was relevant to the birth control controversy, although this was only one among many issues discussed. Pope John had called for more open lines of communication, among Catholics themselves and between Catholics and the rest of the world. In his view, this exchange was necessary if the Church was to continue to have an impact on the world. His goal was a restatement of the Christian message in a form that would be meaningful to contemporary people. Catholic doctrine on marriage had been evolving in such a direction, but the teaching on birth control seemed archaic to many within the Church and to most outside it. Running through all the Council's documents were the themes of collegiality



Wide World photos

A scene at Vatican Council II (1962-65) which engendered a liberal spirit that raised expectations of a change in the traditional Church teaching on birth control.

(sharing in the running of the Church), ecumenism, and the Church as Pilgrim. The spirit engendered by such emphases contributed to an atmosphere in which the teaching on birth control could be confidently reconsidered.

What the Council actually taught about birth control is a matter of some dispute, but the teaching on marriage is clear and introduced a new frame of reference for continuation of the birth control debate. The most explicit passages on marriage appear in the Council's Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *(Gaudium et spes)* which ended the traditional insistence on the primary and secondary ends of marriage. The conciliar fatners, after a spirited debate, described marriage as a "community of love," and—carefully avoiding the terminology of primary and secondary ends—spoke of the natural ordering of marriage and conjugal love to procreation. They assured parents that they alone had the right to decide on the number of children they should have. But in so doing, the Constitution cautioned:

"They will thoughtfully take into account both their own welfare and that of their children, those already born and those which may be foreseen. For this accounting they will reckon with both the material and the spiritual conditions of the times as well as of their state of life. Finally, they will consult the interests of the family group, of temporal society, and of the Church herself."[46]

This teaching was further nuanced with a caution against "breaking off the intimacy of married life" when they "find themselves in circumstances where at least temporarily the size of their families should not be increased." Insisting that the moral aspects of any procedure to be used in regulating the transmission of life depended on objective standards, the Council refrained from entering the debate over contraceptive methods, deferring to the decision of the Pope whose Commission was studying this matter. But the Council declared that moral evaluation of sexual conduct should be based on consideration of "man's person and his acts." In *Humanae vitae* Pope Paul chose to ignore this innovation and returned to the traditional bases of "marriage and its acts."

In dealing with the population problem as such, the Council acknowledged the obligation of government officials to deal with demographic matters, particularly in social legislation as it affects families, in migration to the cities, and in information relating to the conditions and needs of the nation. But, while asserting that people should be judiciously informed of scientific advances in the development of birth control methods, it stated: "In view of the inalienable human right to marry and beget children, the question of how many children should be born belongs to the honest judgment of parents. The question can in no way be committed to the decision of government."

Important to the problem of population control is the Council's injunction that parents in making this judgment should take into account the "material and spiritual conditions of the times" and the "interests of the family and temporal society." This teaching seems to indicate that parents have an obligation not to beget children when they are convinced by their own circumstances or the advice of public authorities that the exercise of their reproductive rights would be a detriment to the well-being of local or global society.

The Papal Birth Control Commission

The Commission for the Study of Population and Family Life submitted its report to Pope Paul in June 1966. In a journalistic scoop the following April, the *National Catholic Reporter* and *Le Monde* published the full text without authorization. As far as can be determined, the Commission's experts voted for a change in the Church's teaching by a majority of some 60 to four, the cardinals by nine to six.[47] Thus the world knew that an overwhelming majority of the double Commission had recommended liberalization on birth control, with a solid theological justification for doing so, and without restricting the contraceptive methods that could be licitly used. The report's publication put severe pressure on the Pope but he delayed another year before issuing his Encyclical, *Humanae vitae*.

Humanae vitae

Although expectations had been growing that Pope Paul would liberalize the Church teaching, his July 1968 Encyclical restated the traditional condemnation of artificial contraception. Referring to the Commission's report proposing liberalization, the Pope said "certain criteria of solutions had emerged which departed from the moral teaching on marriage proposed with constant firmness by the teaching authority of the Church."[48]

Essentially, the Encyclical was an authoritative statement relying on tradition and the Pope's doctrinal supremacy rather than on arguments from the scrip-

tures or human reason in contending that "every conjugal act had to be open to the transmission of life." Asserting his right to interpret natural law, Pope Paul said the morality of the conjugal act had to be taken from "the nature of marriage and its actions," apparently contradicting the Vatican Council II teaching that its moral value should be determined by objective standards taken from "the nature of the human person and his activities."

In justifying his stand, Pope Paul said:

"... teaching the prohibition of contraceptives is founded upon the inseparable connection, established by God and unable to be broken by man on his own initiative, between the unitive and the procreative meanings, both of which are present in the conjugal act.

For in its intimate structure, the conjugal act, while most closely uniting husband and wife, also gives them the capacity for the generation of new life, according to the laws inscribed in the very being of man and woman. By safeguarding both of these essential aspects—the unitive and the procreative—the use of marriage preserves in its fullness the sense of true mutual love and its ordination of man's exalted calling to parenthood."

By asserting that the unity between the couple and the procreative end of the conjugal act are by divine design inseparable, the Pope insisted that "whoever deliberately renders coitus sterile attacks its meaning as an expression of mutual self-giving."

The trouble with the Pope's analysis of the marital act is that it repeated assertions made by Pius XI in *Casti connubii* which had come to be considered incomplete and imperfect by theologians and even by Pius XII. Pope Paul's argument was based on an obsolete concept of biology that attributes to every act of coitus a possibility that happens only relatively rarely, namely, the transmission of life. The Encyclical admitted that coital acts during infertile periods are legitimate. But, by their very nature, such coital acts are not directed toward procreation, and thus they do actually separate the unitive meaning of conjugal intimacy from the possible transmission of life. This means that at one point the Encyclical itself unwittingly accepts a factual separation of the unitive and procreative aspects of coital acts—those that occur during the woman's infertile periods.

The second great difficulty pointed out by theological opponents of the Encyclical is that it measures the meaning of the human act by examining its physiological structure.[49] In a number of places in the document, biological organisms and the processes of nature are accepted as the determinants of moral meaning. They are said to represent God's plan and therefore to be morally normative.

The Reaction

The Encyclical's conclusions came as a complete surprise to the two men who had served as vice-presidents of the papal "birth control" Commission, Cardinals John Heenan of Westminster (London) and Julius Doepfner of Munich. When it was claimed that the Pope had followed the "minority" report, Heenan vehemently denied that any such document existed. The two parts of the Commission had presented their conclusions to the Pope; the dissenters had simply not been represented. On their own, at the insistence of Cardinal Ottaviani, the four theologians who had adhered to the traditionalist view had prepared statements that were collated and presented to the Pope by Ottaviani. But in no sense did this document represent a minority report.

A careful reading of the Encyclical reveals that it is a truncated document. This fact was acknowledged by Father Jan Visser, one of the four traditionalists who forced the Pope to restore the paragraph permitting therapeutic use of steroids and progesterone chemicals against the advice of diehard advisers who wanted to eliminate any possibility of a loophole in the prohibition.

Actually, what the document amounts to is an assertion by the Pope that, as the supreme interpreter of natural law, his fiat is final in expressing the Church's moral viewpoint. The flaws in this assertion were among those cited in a statement prepared within 48 hours of the Encyclical's appearance by a group of theologians at the Catholic University of America. This challenge to the Pope was signed by over 600 Catholic scholars.[50]

American theologians and others

The American theologians pointed out that the Pope's concept of natural law had been challenged by serious scholars over the past few decades and that, insofar as he based his principal argument on the biological structure of the sexual act, he was not allying himself with the authentic teaching of Vatican Council II. The Council had said that the morality of the conjugal act had to be determined from "the nature of the human person and his activities." With the words "nature of marriage and its actions," the Pope had returned to the biological structure as the basis on which to consider the moral value. While the physiological function of the sex act was important, its significance had been sharply lowered by the Council's refusal to define procreation as the primary end of marriage. Besides, the physical components of any act—such as theft or lying—are not evil in themselves. The malice arises from the misuse made of these material acts by their user. This argument was particularly appropriate when applied to the sex act since it was not always "open to the transmission of life" as the Pope asserted. Biologically, his statement could not be sustained; hence, the moral evaluation had to be taken from the personal involvement of the couple engaging in the act.[51]

The statement pointed out that the Pontiff exposed himself to a contradiction in insisting that the unitive and procreative aspects of conjugal intercourse could not be separated without grave fault. For he readily admitted that conjugal coitus was legitimate during sterile periods, thus upholding the legitimacy of the rhythm method of birth control. He also recognized the legitimacy of coitus in the many situations where there was no possibility of impregnation because of age or natural defects.

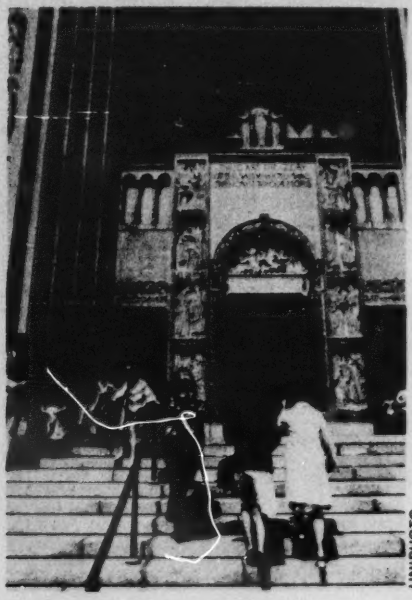
An early analysis by one American theologian concluded that what the Pope was actually trying to achieve was a marital ethic regarding sex that would offset the breakdown in moral values represented by the free love and the pornographic and hedonistic revolutions that predominated in the contemporary world. Far from making any impression on this situation, the Encyclical seemed bound to elicit a determination by the Church's critics to downgrade Catholic moral teaching in all spheres, and particularly that of sex.[52]

The furor that greeted the Encyclical's appearance within and outside the Church is well known. National conferences of Catholic bishops around the world felt obliged to clarify the Encyclical's contraceptive teaching. In short order, the episcopates of Canada, The Netherlands, West Germany, Austria, Scandinavia, and Belgium went on record as accepting the papal teaching but modifying its application in favor of the right of individuals to follow their own consciences. The reaction of U.S. bishops was similar although an episcopal spokesman interjected his opinion that good Catholics could hardly make up their consciences in opposition to the mind of the Holy Father. The French bishops declared that the contraceptive act, while always a disorder, need not always be considered a sin. And the Italian bishops, while supporting the papal position as an ideal, stated that people should not consider themselves guilty of sin if they did not always succeed in living up to that ideal. On the other hand, the bishops of England, Ireland, Australia, and of the Eastern Euro-

pean countries and most of the developing regions supported the Encyclical almost without question.

The diversity of reaction by Catholic theologians and laity, particularly in the United States, helped to soften the adverse reaction of the other Christian churches and secular organizations. Many groups were frankly shocked by the papal decision, particularly since it had not reflected the conclusions of the Papal Commission for the Study of Population and Family Life.

Overall, *Humanae vitae* tended to confuse the issue of commitment to responsible parenthood enunciated by Vatican Council II. It also caused considerable anguish among Catholic couples who had made up their minds, in keeping with the conciliar directive on the right of parents to decide the number of their children, that contraceptive practices were licit. But, as noted for the United States, it failed to stem the rapid increase in married Catholics who felt themselves obliged to resort to artificial birth control practices.



UNIPHOTO

Weekly attendance at mass fell sharply among U.S. Catholics following Pope Paul VI's reaffirmation of the Church ban on artificial contraception in his 1968 Encyclical Humanae vitae.

Surveys by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) further revealed that "anger over the birth control ruling" among U.S. Catholics was directly related to a decline in weekly attendance at mass from 70 percent in the early 1960s to 44 percent in the mid-1970s. While weekly mass attendance has since rebounded to 50 percent, a NORC survey of 1979 found that only 4 percent of Catholics in their twenties believed that contraception was wrong, compared to 49 percent in 1963. For Catholics in their twenties who attended mass every week, the figure was 13 percent in 1979 versus 80 percent in 1963.[53]

Continuing debate

The outcry against the Encyclical by bishops, responsible theologians, and faithful Church followers was sufficient to give rise to doubts as to the final value of Pope Paul's decision. Earlier popes had made erroneous judgments in important matters, as when they authorized the burning of witches, justified slavery, or claimed to possess temporal as well as spiritual authority so that they could depose a civil ruler for grave injustice.

In promulgating the Encyclical, Pope Paul had purposefully refrained from designating its teaching as infallible and his spokesman, the present Archbishop Ferdinand Labruschini, said explicitly that it was not irreformable. Nevertheless, arch-conservatives within the Church argued for strict adherence to the papal teaching on the basis of the Vatican Council II doctrine of obedience due to the Pope as the head of the Church's *Magisterium*, or teaching authority. They controverted the objections to the papal arguments—particularly those that challenged the Pope's right to interpret the natural law, his rejection of the recommendations of the papal Commission, and his contention that by separating procreation from coital ac-

tivity the way was being opened to a breakdown in sexual morality. Some population experts challenged the effectiveness of birth control in solving the world's demographic problems. And arguments were even advanced to prove that concerns over a coming collision between food supplies and human numbers were alarmist.[54]

Liberal opponents of the Encyclical granted that traditional Church teaching condemned birth control. But they maintained that with the jettisoning of so much of earlier theories on the nature of marriage and the sex act itself and the revolutionary teaching of the Council in regard to marital love and parental responsibility for child-spacing, the Pope's decision was questionable to say the least. They felt he had not done justice to any of these considerations, which were the official doctrine of the Church defined by the Pope himself and the bishops at Vatican Council II.

Thus a principal phase of the argument turned on the nature and binding force of papal authority in such matters. Here the clash helped develop theological thinking. Although Pope Paul obviously had no intention of backing down on the principal contention of his Encyclical, later, as noted, he admitted a pluralism in theological opinions that went a long way toward accommodating both sides within the Church and presented a healthy lead toward solving the possibly negative effect of the Encyclical on ecumenism.

In its concern for the survival of the human species, the Church in the past took grave measures to promote pronatalist policies. Now that population growth is a threat, it would seem that the Church is called upon to present the world with an equally sensitive attitude. Pope Paul was accused of flying in the face of human destiny by denying the legitimacy of contraceptives. What he actually achieved was the awakening of Catholics to the fact that they must take personal responsibility for their judgments and acts in sexual and other moral matters rather than almost blindly doing what they are told by their pastors and bishops. Among non-Catholics involved in solving the world's population problems, the papal cautions helped achieve a renewed determination to reorient the population debate to take account of the diverse cultures and beliefs of contemporary mankind.

1980 Synod of Bishops

With the election of Pope John Paul II in October 1978, liberal-minded Catholics and theologians hoped for a reorientation in Church thinking on birth control as on many other issues. The new Holy Father's comparative youth, his reputation as a poet and philosopher, and his ability to mesmerize people were hopeful signs. However, it quickly became apparent that, while he was a jet-set pontiff intent on personally spreading the gospel message all over the world, he was much more of a conservative than either John or Paul whose names he had assumed. On numerous occasions in Mexico, the U.S., in Africa, Brazil, and the Philippines, he has stood four-square behind the teachings of *Humanae vitae*.

Nevertheless, soon after his inauguration as bishop of Rome, John Paul authorized preparations for the Synod of Bishops to be held in the fall of 1980 and accepted as the theme "The Role of the Christian Family in the World of Today."

Resurrected in 1967 by Pope Paul VI as an attempt to give the diocesan cardinals and bishops a direct part in the collegial government of the Church, with and under the Pope, the Synod was an ancient device in which elected delegates from the various provinces of the Church came together to discuss and possibly solve problems in doctrine and discipline affecting particular regions or the universal Church.

To counteract the supreme influence of the bureaucratic Roman curia on the

Church's teaching, a majority of the prelates at Vatican Council II had voted for synodal rule. However, as would be demonstrated by the current assembly, the machinery for a substantive contribution to papal decisions by prelates from outside Rome has not been achieved. Although discussions were free during the Synod itself, the diocesan cardinals and bishops enjoyed only a consultative and not a deliberative vote. In addition, their participation in the final conclusions of the Synod were strictly controlled, with the Vatican publishing the results of the assembly's discussions, following Pope John Paul's own summation of its principal decisions.[55]

Preparations for the Synod had been auspicious. Over the preceding two years, as the newly appointed permanent secretary of the Synod, Archbishop Josef Tomko, assured a press conference in mid-September 1980, consultations with the episcopal conferences around the world had resulted in a Vatican working paper that had been severely criticized and revised numerous times. It was to serve not so much as an agenda as a guideline for keeping the synodal discussions within the parameters of family life.[56]

Ironically, the most severe criticism of this document came from Africa where Pope John Paul had spoken frequently on the ideals of Christian marriage during his ten-day visit in May 1980. A pastoral consultation in Tanzania said the Vatican paper focused exclusively on the European concept of monogamous marriage and the nuclear family. This marital structure did not represent the reality of the universal Church, particularly in Africa and Asia, where the extended family, with its tribal and blood relationships, still prevailed.[57] Pastoral consultations of the laity in other sectors of the Church, while less extreme, had also criticized the document.

The Synod gathered 216 bishops, cardinals, and heads of religious orders for closed discussions at the Vatican, lasting from September 26 to October 25. At its conclusion, the delegates presented 43 propositions to the Pope, John Paul gave a final sermon, and a 2,700-word "Message to Christian Families in the Modern World" was released.

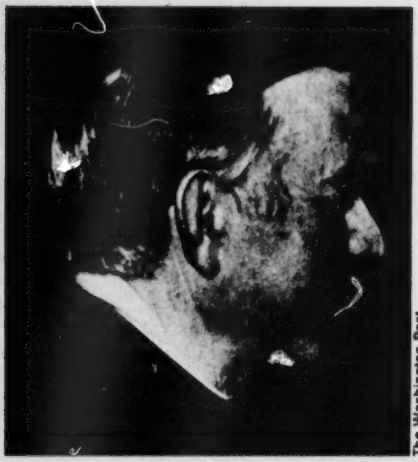
What was said

Inaugurating the meeting, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger of Munich presented a summary of the views forwarded to Rome by the conferences of bishops.[58] Doctrinally speaking, he reported, the majority of the bishops were satisfied with the status quo of the Church's teaching on the family. Of the topics that would certainly come to the fore, he mentioned the role of women in the Church, the institutional and public character of marriage as a Christian witness, the dangers from consumerism as well as extreme poverty, and the need for a profound restatement of the truths contained in Pope Paul's disputed Encyclical *Humanae vitae*.

Early on in the discussion, Cardinal Vincente Enrique y Tarancon of Madrid insisted that the complex of problems confronting the Christian family today could not be faced without a fresh output of energy and imagination. In practice, he said, this required listening to the laity who live in families. The Synod must pay attention to present developments in social, economic, and other aspects of modern life that give new shape to old questions.

In keeping with this observation, the assembly was brought to attention by the unexpected speech of Archbishop John Quinn of San Francisco, outgoing president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. Quinn addressed the subject of contraception directly. Denying categorically that he was attacking *Humanae vitae*, he nevertheless observed that this teaching was contested by priests and people whose faith, practice of their religion, and good will simply could not be called into question.

He pointed out that Pope Paul's hope that "people of good will" would see the validity of his teaching had not been ful-



The Washington Post

Archbishop John Quinn of San Francisco, speaking at the 1980 Bishops' Synod, urged more open dialogue on official Church teaching in light of today's personal and population problems.

filled. Surveys showed that 76.5 percent of American Catholic women of childbearing age practice birth control and only 29 percent* of American priests consider the use of artifical contraceptives as sinful. (See *Bulletin*, pages 15-17.) The archbishop drew a practical conclusion. The credibility of the *Magisterium*, or teaching office of the Church, was being challenged by an ever-widening circle of the faithful. And while the Holy See claimed to have a demographic policy regarding responsible parenthood, it was not coming to grips with the fact that 350,000 babies were being born each day while only 200,000 people were dying. Besides, by the year 2000, another billion people would be added to the already severely overcrowded cities of developing countries with their enormous slum areas and millions of abandoned children. Increasingly, conscientious couples were being convinced that they had no right to beget large families either because of their own straitened economic or psychological situations or because of the precarious state of world population. Nor could these people be faulted as selfish or hedonistically oriented as they often were by Church officials.

To resolve the impasse between official teaching and widespread dissent, Quinn proposed that greater attention be paid to the Church's teaching on the transmission of life. He suggested that nuances and clarifications could amount to a development of the doctrine. He recalled instances of such evolution at Vatican Council II in the understanding of sacred scripture and the new attitude of the Church toward human rights. But he did not venture a guess as to where such development might lead in regard to the crucial sentence: "Every conjugal act must be open to the transmission of life."

He did propose a second avenue of approach: a dialogue between the Church's consenting and dissenting theologians on the personal and demographic problems of the modern world, to be presided over by the Holy See. Here he was careful to stress the dispassionate honesty that would have to accompany such a consultation, without referring to the Vatican propensity to load the evidence in favor of its position, as it had been doing ever since the appearance of *Humanae vitae*.

He was supported in this general approach by Archbishop Joseph Bernardin of Cincinnati.[60]

Quinn's speech was seized upon by the world press as a challenge to the Church's official teaching by the American episcopate. While repudiating this interpretation in a press statement the following day, Quinn nevertheless cited his call for more open dialogue on contemporary personal and population problems, which had to be recognized if the

*Archbishop Quinn must have been referring to the 1969 survey of parish priests cited on page 16 of this *Bulletin* since this is the only one that has queried U.S. priests' views of the Encyclical.[59] This figure does not tally with the actual results of that survey which suggest that 64 percent of American priests—in 1969, at least—considered use of the pill as sinful.

Church was to retain its credibility.

Archbishop Daneels of Brussels spoke of the fear that infects many young couples before embarking on the dangers of marriage and begetting a family. While the Belgian bishops remained loyal to the Holy See, he said this did not preclude "our seeking a way out of the anguish besetting our people over what they consider impossible demands of official thinking." Bishop Ernst of Breda, The Netherlands, made essentially the same plea. The identity of the Christian family must be sought after with the testimony of couples, theologians, philosophers, and experts in the human sciences. The cleavage between the faith as it is lived and the declarations of the *Magisterium* had not been brought about by the egoism or materialism of married couples but by the conscientious exercise of their responsibilities.[61]

Bishop Jacques Jullien of Beauvais, speaking for the French hierarchy, insisted that the quality of a couple's Christian commitment could not be gauged in terms of their contraceptive means. After consultation with some 60,000 Catholics, the French episcopal conference was convinced that "techniques of [ovulation] observation" were not practical for large sections of the faithful. A way must be found so that these families could live without the constant anxiety brought on by the rigidity of Church teaching.

The Quinn call for an honest confrontation of the world's demographic situation was echoed by several speakers from different parts of the globe. Bishop Patrick Iteka of Tanzania said that, while Africans have traditionally regarded large families as a blessing, today the socioeconomic situation had turned parenthood into a burden. Hence, if the quality of life was to be improved, families would have to be planned. Such planning required the use of either natural means that had proven inadequate to many couples, or of artificial means not accepted by the Church. The Synod had to come up with an answer adequate to this unavoidable problem.

Archbishop Angelo Fernandes of New Delhi made a strong plea for the millions of families who, because of destitution or ignorance, have no hope of achieving the dignity of a true marriage and whose ability to exercise responsible parenthood was nil. He asked the Synod for a pastoral statement concerning contraception in light of the plight of his people.[62]

A number of Third World prelates shared the different view of Bishop Dennis de Jong of Zambia. He blamed the difficulties affecting families and family morality on the social and economic injustice induced by both capitalist and communist systems that resulted in enormously widespread starvation, infant mortality, the separation of workers from their families, and the degraded living and working conditions of a third of mankind. These factors were worsened by the policies of governments and voluntary institutions in industrialized nations that made birth control programs a necessary condition of economic aid.[63]

This accusation was echoed by Bishop François-Wolff Ligondé of Haiti and, surprisingly, Cardinal Jaime Sin of Manila, Cardinal Joseph Cordeiro of Pakistan, Bishop Mendes de Almeida of Brazil, and Cardinal Juan Landazuri Ricketts of Lima, Peru. The latter challenged the population "overage." He complained of organizations and governments that, under pressure from such sources as the U.S. Agency for International Development and the International Planned Parenthood Federation, were forcing people to restrict the number of their children drastically, threatening or imposing abortion or sterilization on noncooperative citizens. Despite frequent disclaimers of any such activities by USAID authorities, this accusation was a repeated theme of these speeches.[64]

An unexpected angle was brought up by the cardinal of England, George Basil Hume. He pointed out that, in the synodal working paper, stress was laid on the "prophetic mission" of the family

based on the experience of husband and wife in their understanding of marriage. He suggested that this *sensus fidelium*, or "mind of the faithful," as expressed in many pastoral consultations held around the world before the Synod, must be considered as a *fons theologica*, or "source of doctrinal awareness," to which the Church's pastors had to pay attention. Then, tackling the problem of contraception head on, Hume said the well-being of the Church was suffering from the controversy over birth control. While some couples discovered new riches in their married life through the teaching of *Humanae vitae*, others simply could not accept the prohibition of artificial methods and found so-called natural means intolerable. Nor could it be said that these people had failed to overcome their human frailty and sinfulness. The problem was more complex.[65]

In a speech as frank and unexpected as that of the American Archbishop Quinn, Derek Worlock, the archbishop of Liverpool, startled the assembly on the topic of the Church's dealings with the divorced and remarried. Citing the desire of men and women for a more satisfying fulfillment within their conjugal relationship, the availability of means to control their marital fertility, and the new role of women, Worlock said that it was all too easy to dismiss these factors as materialism and hedonism. Describing the economic and social factors affecting families adversely, he said that, despite the best efforts of the faithful and their pastors, some marriages fail and the family unity is destroyed. For these victims of misfortune, and not necessarily of personal sin, the Church must have a healing ministry of consolation. In a dramatic ending, he asked:

> "Is their spirit of repentance and desire for sacramental strength to be forever frustrated? Can they only be told they must reject their new responsibilities as a necessary condition of restoration to sacramental life."[66]

To these pleas, the curial bloc led by the Church's chief legist, Cardinal Pericle Felici of the *Segnatura* (the Church's Supreme Court), turned a deaf ear, with the observation that the law and not compassion was the criterion of the Church's moral code.[67]

Fortunately, the Church's true sentiments were upheld by the Master General of the Dominican Order, Father Vincente de Couesnongle, who reminded the gathering that "too many Catholics believe they are condemned by the Church because it is difficult for them to follow the teachings about sexuality." God's design is a design of love, he insisted. "This is the fundamental law of the Gospel. We must return to it without fail in all things. For it is on love that we will be judged."[68]

Such interventions had no effect on the Roman prelates who felt themselves threatened by the suggestion that the precisions of the law should be clouded over by the imprecisions of love as criteria for ethics or morality. For the Roman-trained hierarch or theologian, arguments pointing to the disregard of the Church's teaching on both birth control and divorce and remarriage by literally millions of church-going Catholics had no significance. Statistics, they said, do not make morality.

Amid the call for an idealistic approach to marriage as a sacrament, what startled many prelates was the frank admission that a large majority of baptized Catholic couples in most Third World countries and a substantial proportion of young couples in the First World were not joined in a Church-blessed marital union due to ignorance, lack of priests, loss of faith, guilt complexes associated with Church doctrines, or the degraded conditions in which the destitute lived. This was raised by Bishop Albert Tabar of Quito, Ecuador. He wanted to know how the ideals of Christian marriage, expressed so eloquently by many prelates, could be expected of such marginal families in their economic misery and irregular cohabitational unions. How were they to function as "churches in miniature," reaching out to

United Nations/Rothstein

A couple just married in La Paz, Bolivia. While extolling marriage as a sacrament, Synod delegates were startled to learn that a large majority of Catholic couples in the Third World and many in developed countries are not joined in a Church-blessed marital union.

evangelize their neighbors, when they lacked not merely the grace of the sacraments, but also the knowledge and the energy to keep themselves alive.[69]

Group discussions

During the second two weeks of the Synod, the delegates divided into eleven small language groups to discuss the problems aired in the speeches and interventions. While debate was free and lively, it was in these sessions that the curial control of the gathering began to be subtly asserted. The pall of *Humanae vitae* hung over the gathering. And each section was eased into accepting the Encyclical as a "prophetic document."[70]

A selected group of 16 married couples (some with babies) and five doctors was introduced to support the Vatican contention that natural family planning methods, particularly the Billings sympto-thermal observational approach,* were not only feasible but also the only legitimate answer to the need of families to exercise responsible parenthood. While the earlier discussions had attempted to deal with the *sensus fidelium* (mind of the faithful) in its function as a theological witness, as requested by the British cardinal, the French, Dutch, and other bishops, this totally structured group made it clear that in Rome's mind the *Magisterium*, or teaching function of the Church, belonged essentially to the Pope and the bishops.

It was the Latin-language group, composed mainly of curial cardinals such as Oddi, Palazzini, Felici, and Seper, with several prelates from behind the Iron Curtain, that betrayed the curial thinking. It began with a statement that, in studying marriage, the "doctrinal method" (the a priori imposition of traditional teaching on specific conjugal situations) should prevail over the attempt to understand the facts before searching for theological answers. Cardinal Palazzini derided the idea that pastoral practices could be justified if they were not in full keeping with the authentic doctrine of the Catholic Church. He claimed that, although Vatican Council II had not used the term "primary and secondary ends of marriage," this concept had been implicitly retained. As a consequence, the Church's teaching that procreation was the primary end of marriage had to be upheld. Considering the battle that had involved Pope Paul himself during the fourth session of the Council to eliminate this clause from the Church's definition of marriage, this was sheer misrepresentation. It was a warning of the course of things to come.

Palazzini condemned any deviation from the tenets of *Humanae vitae* with the explicit observation that sexuality has the transmission of life as its goal.

*This method attempts to identify the time of a woman's ovulation by observing such symptoms as cervical mucus patterns, menstrual mid-cycle pain and bleeding, and temperature shifts.

The duty of priests and theologians, he concluded, was not to correct or diminish divine law, of which he and his colleagues in the Vatican were the custodians, but to help the faithful to observe it.[71]

During the synodal discussions almost no attention was paid to the highly successful planned parenthood campaigns among the poor and destitute in both urban and rural areas of many Latin American countries, the Philippines, Indonesia, and other parts of the Third World. Nor was recognition, other than condemnation, given to highly motivated Catholics and others engaged in running maternity clinics for teenaged and unwed mothers and their success in enabling the underfed and underprivileged not to conceive the children they often say they do not wish to bear.[72] Instead, the United Nations, the United States, and capitalist-based voluntary agencies were accused of threatening violence via sterilization and abortion to force a "contraceptive mentality" on the poor and oppressed. This theme was sounded with some frequency in the 20 or so speeches, most cut to the curial cloth, with which the Synod concluded.[73]

Message to Christian Families

A "Message to Christian Families in the Modern World" was issued on the final day of the Synod.[74] Prepared by a group of delegates under the guidance of Cardinal Felici, it proved to be a restatement, in slightly modernized dress, of the most traditional of Church doctrine.

It stated that "Today the family is sometimes obliged to choose a way of life that goes contrary to modern culture in such matters as sexuality, individual autonomy and material wealth. In the face of sin and failure, it gives witness to an authentically Christian spirit." The message criticized unjust social, economic, and political structures which increase world poverty, the "spiritual emptiness" in the midst of abundance found in more developed countries, and the disregard for the rights of families exhibited by "certain governments and some international organizations." As a result, it said, "Families are compelled, and this we oppose vehemently, to use such immoral means for the solution of social, economic and demographic problems as contraception or, even worse, sterilization, abortion and euthanasia."

It reaffirmed the indissolubility of marriage and the teaching of *Humanae vitae:* "The transmission of life is inseparable from the conjugal union. The conjugal act must be fully human, total, exclusive and open to new life." Those who find it difficult to live up to the "loving demands of Christ" are urged not to be discouraged. "The pain of the cross, as well as the joy of the Resurrection, is part of the life of one who seeks . . . to follow Christ."

John Paul's conclusion

Pope John Paul's closing sermon hewed even closer to the traditional hard line. In that address, the Pontiff signaled his intention to dismiss the achievements of a majority of the Church's theologians in their attempt to update Catholic moral thinking in keeping with the prescriptions of Vatican Council II, particularly their attempts to understand the facts of modern life before seeking Gospel-oriented moral principles with which to judge them. The Pope likewise ignored the pleas of responsible prelates for attention to the agonized witness of their faithful regarding birth control methods and family planning. He refused to allow divorced and remarried Catholics to participate in the Eucharist or Holy Communion — Christianity's central sacrament—but nevertheless demanded that they live in accord with Catholic teachings.

In his summation of the synodal achievement, John Paul insisted that a unanimity had been achieved in which prelates with pastoral care of married

couples rejected any dichotomy between instruction and doctrine. It is not, he said, a matter of keeping the law as a mere "ideal" to be obeyed in the future. It is the command of Christ the Lord that difficulties should be constantly overcome. The "law of gradualness" is not possible unless a person obeys the divine law. For the "law of gradualness" cannot be the same as "gradualness of the law," as if there were various grades or forms of the commandments for different people and the circumstances in which they live.[75]

With this injunction, the Holy Father seemed intent on destroying a line of Catholic moral development stretching down the ages from the early churchmen who looked upon Christ as the Teacher, gradually coaxing sinners onto the path of holiness. He seemed to be turning away from the final section of *Humanae vitae* where Paul VI gave great encouragement to those who could not immediately achieve the ideal of the Encyclical. Paul had counseled the merciful use of the sacraments of penance and the Eucharist as a remedy for frailty.

John Paul also seemed to repudiate the advice given their faithful by many episcopates, particularly the French and the Italians, who had interpreted the Encyclical precisely as an ideal, assuring their people that while they strove to achieve its demands, they should not consider themselves in grave sin if they failed.

Early U.S. reaction

In the U.S. press, Pope John Paul's words and the Synodal Message—formal statements of declarations the Pontiff had made repeatedly during his visit to the U.S. a year earlier and elsewhere—aroused only faint echos of the furor that had greeted *Humanae vitae*.

American bishops reiterated their loyalty to the Church teachings on birth control at the meeting of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops two weeks after the Synod's close. However, Archbishop John Roach of St. Paul-Minneapolis, elected to succeed Archbishop Quinn as president, said at a news conference that he "could expect that people can maintain integrity and union with the church and not follow the praxis of something like *Humanae vitae.*" He added that, in his view, nevertheless, practicing birth control in violation of the Church law would require "some reconciliation with Almighty God."[76]

Archbishop Quinn read a formal report of the Synod at the same meeting.[77] He made no mention of his discomfiture due to the Pope's unconditional rejection of change and that of the other cardinals and bishops, such as Hume, Daneels, and Ernst, who had requested reconsideration at least of the birth control ban of *Humanae vitae*. Instead, he attempted to justify the acceptance by the vast majority of the delegates of the curial line expressed in the 43 propositions submitted to Pope John Paul at the end of the Synod. Obviously ill at ease with his report, Quinn resorted to the *Apologia* written a century earlier by Cardinal John Henry Newman, in which Newman denied the charge of intellectual dishonesty in his profession of Catholic teachings that seemed absurd to his contemporaries.

The Outlook

Pope Paul's teaching in his Encyclical, and now the insistence of John Paul and the Synod of Bishops on the rightness of this stand, have greatly reduced the Catholic Church's ability to take a leading role in solving the world's population problems. What John Paul and the Synod have insisted upon is an essential value that has been largely lost sight of in the sexual and libertarian revolutions of the current times. There is a sacred quality to sex and marital fidelity that is being jettisoned by modern society to the detriment of human dignity and the destruction of many civilizational values. Unfortunately, John Paul's witness to

this fact has been obscured by the bluntness of his refusal—like Pope Paul before him—to confront the problems of overpopulation, either on a family or a world scale. Further, while he insists upon the evils that he attaches to a contraceptive mentality (by which he means irresponsible sexual behavior, materialism, and the breakdown of fundamental family values), he seems unmindful of the evils of unfaithfulness and disharmony which can come of the attempt to practice sexual continence in married life, as acknowledged by Vatican Council II.[78]

Development as the answer?

Unlike most of the rest of the world, the Church appears unaware of the threat of civilizational breakdown that looms with the prospect of too many people in too little space with too few resources. Although the global growth rate has begun to decline, with fertility rates now falling in many less developed countries, the present annual growth rate of 1.7 percent, if continued, would double the some 4.5 billion world population of 1981 in just 41 years.[79]

Analyzing the population crisis in the early 1970s, Philip Hauser spoke of a "social morphological revolution."[80] The phrase includes: the rapid concentration of people on relatively small portions of the earth's surface, or urbanization, which he termed "implosion"; intergroup conflicts due to the diversity of culture, language, religion, values, and lifestyles of people who live in too close contact, mainly in urban areas, which he calls "displosion"; and rapid technological advances in the use of energy, means of transportation, and communication. Hauser felt then that implosion and displosion would probably create more human misery by the end of the century than population increase. However, he acknowledged that the demographic explosion presents a grave danger to the world's food, energy, and resources potential and a severe obsta-

Pontificia Fotografia/Felici

Pope John Paul II. In his sermon closing the Bishops' Synod, the Pope reaffirmed traditional Church teaching on birth control, divorce, and remarriage.

cle to the aspirations of less developed nations. But he chided the prophets of drastic solutions, such as the Paddocks and Paul Ehrlich, for concentrating too narrowly on high fertility, leaving out the many other factors that limit a nation's development. Among these were the power control exercised by the elite, structures controlling the allocation of income and resources, political corruption, and religious and cultural values. He cited the often-quoted examples of success in Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan, where fertility began falling well before large-scale family planning programs were introduced.

Hauser's prescriptions have been strikingly paralleled in the official attitudes of the churches, particularly in Vatican Council II's Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, the social encyclicals of Pope John and Pope Paul, and policy statements of the World Council of Churches. Pope Paul's

solution was contained in the idea of development.[81] It included the reorientation of all factors affecting human life —social, economic, political, medical, cultural, and religious. This approach does envisage the need for fertility control, but it takes exception to what it considers illicit means, such as artificial contraceptives, abortion, and sterilization. The Protestant churches, as represented by the World Council of Churches, agree with the holistic approach but accept artificial contraceptives as a reasonable solution at the family level. Some non-Roman churches, with the exception of the Orthodox, concede that abortion could be a legitimate resolution in special cases.

Pope John Paul has also taken up the theme of development. In a message to a special UN General Assembly session on international development in September 1980, he said that international development was a constant concern of the Pope and the Holy See. In approaching world development, he said, there is need for a "political will" that goes beyond self-interests and is based on a "solid realistic hope for every man, woman, and child, and for society itself."[82]

Like Paul, John Paul's concept of development envisages a reordering of society. Commenting on the serious world food problem to the diplomatic corps in Rome in January 1980, he said that the "generous plans" which should be doing something to relieve scarcity were compromised by a mass of obstacles that had less to do with the potential of nature than with the shortcoming of men themselves. Pointing particularly to the multiplication of armaments and ideological struggles for power, he asked: "But power for whom? For what? Future generations will call us to account for this. God himself is calling us to account."[83]

In his repeated pleas on behalf of the poor, John Paul has in fact come close to the liberationist theology characteristic of the New Left in Latin America. This theology views the path of development as self-defeating gradualism and calls for a revolutionary change in the political and economic structures which support domination of rich nations and classes over the poor. This approach is greatly influenced by the Marxists, but it is fundamentally Christian in origin and inspiration.[84]

It is thus that Pope John Paul, apparently shocked by the poverty of Indian peasants in Oaxaca, Mexico, in January 1979 promised to be "the voice of the voiceless." In Kenya in May 1980, he insisted:

> "The state must reject anything unworthy of the freedom and of the human rights of its peoples, thus banishing all elements such as abuse of authority, corruption, domination of the weak, the denial to the people of their right to share political life and decisions, tyranny, or the use of violence or terrorism."[85]

Unfortunately, in his transparent faith and compassion for the world's downtrodden, John Paul has not addressed himself to the problem of rapid population increase which hinders the development which he so earnestly wants.[86] In its issue of July 14, 1980, the *New York Times* praised the Pope's visit to Brazil but ended its editorial with the comment:

> "Regrettably, the Pope was silent about a principal contributor to the poverty he saw and deplored. Brazil's population grows by nearly 3 percent a year, and its birth rate is highest where people are poorest. For reasons of doctrine, the Latin American church has been reluctant to address the link between excessive fertility and human misery. Yet church doctrine does not condemn all forms of birth control. A Pope who has the ear of the poor is uniquely fitted to discuss compassionately the privation that the poor visit on themselves. The world would profit if John Paul II could find the words that harmonize old doctrines with new and desperate needs."

John Paul did not find those words in Rome three and a half months later as the Synod of Bishops ended.

What of the Synod?

At the close of the 1980 Synod, two things seemed evident: short of a cataclysmic intervention of the Holy Spirit there would be no change in the anti-contraceptive ruling, leaving unresolved the confusion in the minds of most people regarding the Church's dedication to responsible parenthood in light of its prohibition of artificial contraception. Hence, the Church would not pursue its proper function in preaching a control of births to prevent what otherwise might be a catastrophic population explosion during the early 2000s.[87]

The Vatican contention that economic, social, and political injustices are the cause of starvation in today's world is certainly valid. And Pope John Paul's call for a reorientation of world order, with his invariable insistence on human dignity and human rights, as echoed by episcopates and individuals around the globe, is likewise of the highest value. But this is not a sufficient remedy. It is the type of rhetorical pleading that befits the politician rather than the prophet when it is not backed up with action within the Church's own household.[88]

Here is where criticism of the Synod strikes home. While its Message prescribed excellent ideals of family life, conjugal ascetism, Christlike sacrifice, and evangelistic outreach for Christian marriage and family life, the main obstacles to the achievement of these ideals were not confronted with honesty. Certainly the most important of these difficulties is overcrowding, both in the nuclear family and at the world level.[89] The refusal of the Church's officials to accept the horrifying fact that some ten million human beings enter the world each year without the slightest possibility of achieving the human dignity being proclaimed by the Pope in countless talks is an enigma beyond the understanding of most Vatican observers. It is not based on an ignorance of the statistics, nor a failure to have at least seen a number of the destitute and slum areas in Latin America, the inner cities of the First and Third Worlds, and the extreme poverty of many African nations. Nor is the Pope unaware of the countless calls for assistance from other parts of the world where famine and natural catastrophes have impoverished millions.[90]

Despite the evidence that there are simply too many people in the world for its current social, economic, and political structures, the Pontiff will not recognize the need for a strong, effective program inaugurated by the Catholic Church in conjunction with other religious groups around the world to urge parents to limit their families, drastically if need be. This request could be surrounded with a highly ascetic and spiritual motivation akin to the virginity promoted in the early Church. It could be described as the differential be-

United Nations

Poor children in a slum of Santiago, Chile.

40

tween the survival of the human race, and, therefore, the Body of Christ, and the Armaggedon that could be set off not so much by nuclear destruction as by the struggle for living space.

Now that the synodal conclusions have been enunciated by the Pope as sustaining the ban on artificial contraception, the Catholic perspective on population issues appears all the more enigmatic. While it is highly unlikely that a majority of the church-going Catholics who are currently using artificial contraceptive methods will be affected by the ruling, it is most probable that many couples who had achieved a good conscience in employing such means as necessary to their psychological or economic stability will now return to a certain anxiety that will interfere with their marital harmony.

It is disturbing that the Holy Father chose to ignore the pleas of responsible churchmen such as the Cardinal of Westminster, the archbishops of San Francisco and Liverpool, the bishops of Breda, Beauvais, Brussels, and New Delhi, as well as a host of courageous prelates giving witness to the representations of their people after conscientious consultations. His attempt to eliminate the gradual growth into a method of family planning more acceptable to the official Church, as suggested by the Jesuit Superior General Father Pedro Aruppe and other delegates, is equally startling. And all this while the Pontiff has been declaring his total support for human rights among the nations as well as in the economic and social order.[91]

It is true that, in their conclusion, a large majority of the synodal delegates voted for the 43 propositions, most of which upheld the principal teachings of *Humanae vitae*. Thus they gave the Pope the opportunity to declare that the assembly had reached a consensus on all these matters. But these propositions represented a much more nuanced approach to the problem of birth control than the stark prohibition reiterated unabashedly by John Paul in his sermon closing the Synod.[92]

The result of this synodal action will be a further widening of the gulf between the right and left in the Catholic Church —the integrists, particularly the so-called pro-life groups who feel they have been fully vindicated by the papal decision, and the liberationist theologians and pastors who feel betrayed in their efforts to actualize the Church among the downtrodden and exploited. Not only was no real sympathy shown by the Pontiff for the deplorable situation in which these people live, but ideals were enunciated that would seem to reduce them to a secondary category in the Church.

Meanwhile, however, by forcing Catholics and the world to examine anew and in depth many of the aspects of the population problem and the solutions proposed by various experts, nations, and ideologies, the Synod, following *Humanae vitae*, may prove to have been a benefit to mankind. On the strictly Catholic level, it may further emancipate millions of educated faithful from subservient reliance on hierarchical pronouncements to closer cooperation with pastors and religious counsellors in making up their consciences. This conviction should enable them to demand a hearing when they give authentic witness to their experiences in helping to form the "mind of the Church," as they did in preparation for the recent Synod.

Though their witness was ignored by the Holy See in good part, the record of their experiences in attempting to live a truly Christian family life has been registered by their outspoken cardinals and bishops. Although temporarily sidetracked, this witness cannot but have an effect in gradually accomplishing the teaching of Vatican Council II that the faith and activity of "the people of God," along with the Pope and hierarchy, constitute the Church. This, in turn, should give a new thrust to the nature of the Church's *Magisterium* (teaching authority) which is no longer to be considered uniquely the function of the hierarchy.

While this may seem exaggerated, [illegible]ful thinking, particularly in light of the recent Synod, the experience of Vatican Council II must be kept in mind. There the Church was forced to make 180-degree turns in its teaching on Religious Liberty, Ecumenism, and Conscientious Objection, etcetera—all tenets bearing on the conscience of the faithful confronted with traditional teaching that had to be updated. Close analysis of previous crises in Church history suggests a solution. It is only after an indignant attempt on the part of Rome to prevent turnabouts in its teaching, such as that required by the drastic event of the "population explosion," that the *sensus fidelium* (mind of the faithful) will finally assert itself.[93]

With the full weight of the laity finally being introduced into the thinking on and witness to Catholic doctrine, the contribution of the Roman Catholic Church to the settlement of such pressing world problems as that of rapid population growth could become substantive. For an institution that still affects the intimate thinking of some one-sixth of the world's population, this is no mean consideration. □

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64. *Synodal Bulletin*, No. 10 (September 30) p. 2; No. 15 (October 1) p. 3; No. 28 (October 7) pp. 1-2; No. 40 (October 16) p. 2. Archbishop Terence J. Cooke of New York, in a news conference during the Synod, also claimed that "the U.S. employs 'coercion and pressure' on developing countries to use birth control as a condition for receiving overseas development aid." See "Archbishop Charges 'Coercion' by A.I.D.," *Popline*, January-February 1981, p. 1. USAID spokespeople state that the agency's position is that population is only one of the criteria taken into consideration in determining allocation of scarce develop-

ment resources. Moreover, all development programs, including population programs, are undertaken only at the request of host governments. This position has been spelled out in Congressional briefing papers and, for example, in diplomatic contact with the Vatican in January 1981 by Ambassador Richard E. Benedick, Coordinator of Population Affairs in the U.S. Department of State, and in testimony by Guy F. Erb, Deputy Director, International Development Cooperation Agency (which has jurisdiction over AID), before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee: see, *World Population Trends: U.S. Population Policy and Trends*, Hearings before the Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate, 96th Cong., 2nd sess., April 28 and June 5, 1980, pp. 60 and 62. It should also be noted that, under the so-called Helms Amendment, no U.S. foreign aid funds may be spent on support of abortion.

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72. See, for example, "Family Planning Comes to Barrios of Juarez," *Intercom*, Vol. 6, No. 3 (March 1978) pp. 1, 5, on the work of Planificacion Familiar under the direction of Senora Guadelupe de la Vega in Juarez, Mexico.
73. *Synodal Bulletin* No. 35 (October 14) pp. 1-7 and No. 36 (October 14) pp. 1-9.
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79. Population Reference Bureau, *1981 World Population Data Sheet* (Washington, D.C.: April 1981).
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